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CARLYLE'S
THEORY OF THE HERO

CARLYLE'S THEORY OF THE HERO: Its Sources, Development, History, and Influence on Carlyle's Work . .

A Study of a Nineteenth Century Idea

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By B. H. LEHMAN

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CARLYLE'S
THEORY OF THE HERO

CHAPTER I

THE THEORY OF LEADERSHIP

The Great War gave to what was at first merely a literary interest in Carlyle's theory of the Hero an obvious general significance. For in all quarters amid widespread accusation and occasional defense there became evident the need for a revaluation of certain teachings of Carlyle. Among these none was more in need of conscientious weighing than that of the Hero.

One could not in the nature of the case attempt to say which of the contemporary critics of Carlyle's relation to Hohenzollern manias held tenable ground; one could, on the other hand, undertake to define the Hero-Theory. If I should succeed in this, it seemed to me there would be available for those who at all concerned themselves in the matter data upon which sound judgments might be founded. Yet it would not do merely to define the idea as it manifested itself in the *Lectures on Heroes and Hero-Worship*, for practical definition of any conception depends very largely upon a clear history of its development and, therefore, in this instance, of its sources. Nor would the study be serviceable if the influence of the idea upon its author's life and works were neglected, for the more remote and indirect manifestations of an idea are often very significant and very productive. They insinuate the idea into minds upon which frontal attacks are fruitless.

Yet, even under the happiest circumstances, a study of the sources and origins of Carlyle's theory of the Hero might easily result in one of those 'spiritual genealogies which bring little certainty and little profit.' Certainty indeed was to be secured by nothing less than precision of analysis and thoroughly objective examination of elements.

Profit can be taken only if the most exact method show up to the light unquestionable phases of the history of Carlyle's mind and art. The first of these phases will be disclosed if we can determine how much of the potent conception of the Hero is Carlyle's own, how much an assimilation from without; in other words, what germ of the idea lay in his own mind and heart and by what fertilization the prodigious birth came to pass. In technical phrase, we are bent upon discovering the sources and the origin of the idea. The second phase to be revealed is the effect upon Carlyle and upon his work of this conception which he so long carried in his mind, to which he gave full though by no means final expression in the lectures *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History*, in 1840. This long effect upon the author himself and upon his writings, if it can be laid bare, should of itself in the end justify the entire project here undertaken. For in the generally neglected field of the influence of books upon the men who wrote them, few would be found to have more forcibly taken hold of the pen and more amazingly disfigured page after page, often whole volumes of the author's later works, than this *On Heroes*.

THE HUMAN SITUATION: INEQUALITY

The broad basis upon which this study must be laid is the human situation out of which the conception of Hero or Great Man emerges. Carlyle's doctrine of the Hero is no new thing. The contemporaries of his youth had partly crystallized the idea out of an enormous float of solution. As in this preliminary chapter I re-state the human situation, I hope to suggest the nature of the material that lies behind Carlyle's immediate predecessors.

It is necessary, as will appear, to repeat a platitude. Men are created, as a fact, *not* equal: there is no democracy in the realm of the intellect; men have widely differing holds upon their environments through complex instrumentality of hand and head and heart. Dante had better control over the materials of a poem than Longfellow; Oliver Cromwell had surer command over men than his son. The heart of Jesus showed a peerless hospitality, and the hand of Martha wrought more in outward order than the hand of Mary.

Rousseau himself was perfectly clear upon the point:

'Je conçois dans l'espèce humaine deux sortes d'inégalité [he wrote in answer to the famous question proposed by the Academy of Dijon]: l'une, que j'appele naturelle ou physique, parce qu'elle est établie par la nature, et qui consiste dans la différence des âges, de la santé, des forces du corps et des qualités de l'esprit ou de l'âme; l'autre, qu'on peut appeler inégalité morale ou politique, parce qu'elle dépend d'une sorte de convention, et qu'elle est établie, ou du moins autorisée, par le consentement des hommes . . . .

On ne peut pas demander quelle est la source de l'inégalité naturelle, parceque la réponse se trouverait énoncée dans la simple définition du mot.[1]

When the apostle of equality admits a natural inequality among men, it is perhaps not necessary to accumulate authorities. Nevertheless, some indication of the wide recognition the fact has won will, as I have said, serve us later, and may be given here.

Wherever king and priest receive general loyalty, the loyal ones—and doubtless the king and priest too—recognize the fact of inequality, even though the great man of the moment be an unworthy object. Epic literature is based upon the recognition. Language is full of words, like *duke* and *prince*, which are fossils of a practical inequality. Philosophers have evolved their theories, sometimes anonymously, as in the cases of the Mahatma and the Hebraic Messiah; over their own names, sometimes, as Plato, Confucius, and Plutarch. Nietzsche, says Shaw, in *Man and Superman*, 'was he who raked up the Superman, who is as old as Prometheus.' 'One to me,' cried Heraclitus more than two thousand years earlier, 'is as good as ten thousand if he be but one of the best.'[2] Tacitus, his eye on the same phenomena, wrote: 'pauci prudentia honesta ab deterioribus, utilia ab noxiis discernunt, plures aliorum eventis docentur.'[3] Machiavelli bases his shrewd advice concerning the prince's choice of servants, especially secretaries, upon the existence of 'cervelli' of 'tre generazioni: . . . l'uno intende per se; l'altro intende quanto da

[1] *The Political Writings of Rousseau*, i, 140. [2] 49th Fragment.
[3] *The Annals of Tacitus*, iv, 33.

altri gli é mostro; il terzo non intende nè per se stesso nè per dimostrazione di altri.'[4] Of these, he thinks the first excellent, the second good, the third valueless—as secretary. A century later Francis Bacon upheld the judgment of antiquity in awarding 'divine honors' to the authors of inventions and 'no higher than heroic honors' to those who did good service in the state.[5] In the essay *Of Honor and Reputation*, he distinguishes five 'degrees of sovereign honor' among rulers and four 'degrees of honor in subjects.'

LEADERSHIP

There can be no question of the fact of inequality. What is the significance of the fact in the general human situation? Its significance depends upon the proportion of men with great capacity and high faculty to those of the lower and lowest orders of gifts. Obviously there are fewer of the former, more of the latter. Indeed, the proportion of the highly gifted to all others is very small. Herbert Spencer, who cannot be suspected of prejudice in this matter, divided the human race into a few clever individuals, many ordinary, some decidedly stupid. Of these facts Spencer and those of his school make this interpretation. It is not, they say, to the clever few that change in social phenomena is to be attributed. The factors which determine change are the environments and the natural characters of *all* men. Opposed to this stand arrayed all who believe in any theory of the great man. For these, the significance of the fact of inequality among men lies pre-

[4] *Il Principe*, xxii. [5] *Novum Organum*, i, 129.

cisely in the leverage which ability gives to the few in moving the many who can neither initiate nor control their own action. Some, at the extreme position, insist that the gifted individual may not only initiate and control a great force, but may even originate it. The commonest view is that he does not create the energy of the masses but merely manipulates it. He is a 'releasing' cause or a 'transmitting' cause, not a 'producing' cause.

Whoever holds this view regards the forces of masses of men as merely potential till a great man arise to unlock them, and then as ruinously kinetic unless a great man control them to ends which he foresees. William James points out that Sardinia is as favored in physical condition as Sicily and more fortunate in the stock of its people. Nevertheless, though Sicily has a brilliant history and a great commerce, Sardinia has no history worth writing and no commerce, for the reason that no individuals have been born in Sardinia with patriotism and ability enough to raise the pressure and open the sluice-gates.[6] The function here figuratively defined may be called service, promotion of well-being, stimulation of progress. A general name, widely applied, is leadership.

It is noteworthy that in each of the statements of inequality the phrasing is such as to make leadership inhere in one term of the unequal condition. Certainly Heraclitus can not mean that he will take one and destroy ten thousand; rather, he will give the *one best* a confidence he cannot bestow upon the ten thousand. From this position

[6] *The Will to Believe*, 241-2.

it is but a step to yielding the responsibility for leading the ten thousand to the one. Likewise the conception of leadership inheres in that clause of Tacitus: 'plures aliorum eventis docentur.' The many learn wisdom from the results of others; the few discern in advance. Machiavelli clearly thinks of those who 'understand of themselves' as showing what they understand to the second order of intellects. And although by definition Bacon's 'degrees of sovereign honor' all go to rulers, of his 'degrees of honor in subjects' at least three are for men equal to unusual labors; 'those upon whom princes do discharge the greatest weight of their affairs; . . . great leaders (in war); such as have great places under princes, and execute their plans with sufficiency.'

In fact, at any time before evolutionary doctrine had been scientifically stated, the logical step after recognizing the fundamental inequality among men was to generalize somehow the relations of the two or more orders and to fix the responsibility of those most highly endowed.

It is furthermore necessary to observe that, while the obvious intention of all these thinkers—even Heraclitus—is to comment on a certain phase of the political situation, their statements may easily, except in the case of Bacon, be extended to other than political inequalities. Take Machiavelli for example. His three orders of intellects hold in the art of painting. There is the painter who himself understands what he sees; there are those who look upon the painting and understand what the painter has

there shown; and there are those who can understand neither the thing depicted nor the thing seen. 'Poor brother Lippo,' his eye as always on facts which can not escape him, put the matter clearly:

> . . . we're made so that we love
> First when we see them painted, things we have passed
> Perhaps a hundred times . . .
> . . . Art was given for that;
> God uses us to help each other so,
> Lending our minds out. Have you noticed, now,
> Your cullion's hanging face? A bit of chalk,
> And trust me but you should, though! How much more,
> If I drew higher things with the same truth!
> That were to take the Prior's pulpit-place
> Interpret God to all of you!

La carrière est ouverte aux talents; the tools to him who can handle them. These are the maxims of a world which knows that in all arts, in all sciences, in trade and in profession, there is a superior order of ability and a lower order, a world fascinated by the romance of Excalibur to the very point of losing its sense of criticism. It is not a matter of pure intellect nor of mere political, or military, leadership with which we are concerned. The inequality is essential, central. In Auguste Comte's positivist calendar of great men five hundred and fifty-eight names are drawn from the first figures in 'Religion, Poetry, Philosophy, War, Statesmanship, Industry, and Science,' and all the arts.[7]

[7] Harrison, *The New Calendar of Great Men.*

THE QUALITY OF THE GREAT MAN

If we turn now to ask what is the quality of the great man, cutting across all superficial categories of arts and sciences, we find ourselves in the presence of confusion. To the man in the street a great man is one thing; to the thinker in his closet a great man is another. The confusion which results from the blending of two conceptions must be got rid of before we can isolate the essential quality of the great man.

The man in the street is, as a fact, primarily concerned with authority—the thinker with ability. Hence we must consider what relation the source of authority to lead men bears to the source of ability to lead men. We can best determine this relation by first making an arbitrary separation of all leaders under political theory from all other leaderships. In all leaderships other than political, the world in general concerns itself not with the authority of the leader but with his ability. The logic of the situation in these departments appears to be this: Ability induces authority; if he can, a man may;[8] the might to be a great painter, scientist, or inventor makes the right. So that, it appears, actually ability is the source of authority.

In political theory it at first seems to be the case that authority to lead is regarded as conferring ability. The problem must be viewed historically. Political doctrine has oscillated between the idea of divine right and the idea of popular will. Between the extremes for a moment,

[8] Transferred to politics this explains naturally and as fully as any elaborate discourse the Carlylean 'Might makes right.' (See MacMechan, *Heroes*, 165).

now and then, the pendulum hangs vertical at zero—*vox populi* is *vox Dei*. *Vox Dei*, whether as in some ages it acts through hereditary succession or through an elective succession as in the Holy Roman Empire, appoints its leaders. In the earliest ages it was understood that the authority of the political leader came somehow from God or the gods. Moses, whatever actually passed upon the sapphire pavement, was supposed to have been authorized by the Divinity. And the political leaders of the early Greeks and early Teutons, whose offices were partly (sometimes mostly) military, were conceived as demi-gods, or heroes moving under divine guidance and even subject to intervention. The Aristotelian view of the natural inequality of human nature is merely a rationalized ultimate phase of which the hero or demi-god idea was a mythical beginning. After a period in which Seneca's and Cicero's doctrine of the natural equality of human nature held sway,[9] the Fathers developed again a conception based on natural inequality which became the normal one of the Middle Ages.[10] In the ninth century it stood thus: 'all authority whether temporal or spiritual is ultimately derived from God.'[11] This divine derivation of authority gave the state

[9] Cicero unquestionably held this doctrine. For a terse summary see R. W. Carlyle and A. J. Carlyle, *A History of Mediaeval Political Theory in the West*, 3 vols., 1903, 1909, 1916, i, 8-9. I labor this point, particularly, because everyone remembers from *Pro Archias:* 'But a Poet is formed by the finger of nature, he is aroused by the mental vigour, and inspired by what we may call the Spirit of Divinity itself. Therefore our Ennius has a right to give to poets the epithet of Holy, because they are, as it were, lent to Mankind by the indulgent Bounty of the Gods.'

[10] *A History of Mediaeval Political Theory in the West*, iii, 106.

[11] Ibid, iii, 92-93.

a moral function;[12] the king was 'God's minister for the punishment of the wicked and the reward of the good.'[13]

The theory here briefly surveyed presupposes inequality in men at least to the extent of divine authorization of specified mortals. Under practice of it the great man naturally emerges. Indeed, the whole conception may be regarded as a way of accounting for the great man. If you have no psychological method, if evolutionary doctrine is undreamed of, you explain the fact of genius by saying, 'God did it.' Of course, so far as analysis is concerned, to say a man is a great leader because he is God's vicar is to beg the question. The 'vicar of God' idea has, however, an advantage in that it is at heart religious, as have been from primitive times to our own day all philosophies, whether personal or popular (*i.e.* mythic), that attempt to account for the superior gifts of great men by referring the matter to divine intervention. They are the result of the religious temperament wreaking itself upon the universe. We may, I think, say therefore that the political theory of divine authority for the great man is merely a manner of speaking, a statement of a fact in the idiom of the religious.

The other important historical conception of the source of political authority, that it rests in the *vox populi*, is more difficult to adjust to the practice of leadership. Behind this conception stands Cicero's and Seneca's doctrine of the natural equality of human nature.[14] The Roman

[12] Ibid, iii, pt. ii, ch. iii. [13] Ibid, iii, 182-3.
[14] Ibid, ii, 57, especially notes.

Emperors, even as late as Justinian, recognized the people as the one source of authority. The Roman lawyers established the doctrine later in the *Digest* and in the *Institutes*. For instance, Julianus, a jurist of the period of Hadrian and the Antonines, is cited in the *Digest* (1.3.32.)[14] to the effect that 'custom has rightly the force of law, in as much as law derives its authority from the people, and it is immaterial whether the people declares its will by vote or by custom.' In modern times the idea informs most governments of nations—presidents and ministers everywhere receiving authority from their clients.

The problem here is laid bare by one question: When the people confers authority upon a leader, does it confer therewith ability? Edmund Burke has a bit of pathetic evidence in *A Letter to a Noble Lord:* 'I have strained every nerve to keep the Duke of Bedford in that situation which alone makes him my superior.'[15] The question is old. Sir Thomas Elyot, knight, asked it in 1531. In Book II, Chapter iv, of *The Governour*, he tells of

> Quintius hauyng but xxx acres of lande, and beinge ploughman thereof the Senate and people of Rome sent a messager to shewe him that they had chosen him to be *dictator*, whiche was at that time the highest dignitie amonge the Romanes, and for thre monethes had autoritie roiall. Quintius herynge the message, lette his ploughe stande, and wente in to the citie and prepared his hoste againe the Samnites, and vainquisshed them valiauntly. And that done, he surrendred his office, and beinge discharged of the dignitie, he repaired agayne to his ploughe, and applied it diligently.[16]

[15] *Works*, v, 196-7. [16] *The Governour*, 128-9.

Then Sir Thomas asks this question: 'I wolde demaunde nowe, if nobilitie were only in the dignitie, or in his prowesse, which he shewed agayne his enemies?'[17] This he answers: 'Nobilitie' is in the prowess, which is constant in the man. The man in office may grow in power; probably does. 'Der Mensch wächst mit seinen Zielen.' 'Es wächst der Mensch mit seinen grössern Zwecken.' But it is growth from within, under benign influence to be sure, not power conferred from without. In short, in this phase as in all others, ability is not derived from authority.

Nor can the two be regarded as the same thing: ability and authority as synonymous words. Logic forbids. For the people always exists, and, since authority resides in the people as one of the essential facts of existence, authority is coëxistent with the people. But ability to lead is often in abeyance. The general practice in popular governments tacitly recognizes these considerations.

The dualism which lies deep in this distinction between authority and ability in political theory involves, then, no fallacy. It is, indeed, merely another way of phrasing, with narrower implications, the Hegelian distinction between *virtuous conduct* or *natural excellence* and *civic* or *legal righteousness*. The people confers upon a leader *civic righteousness: natural excellence* they can not bestow, just as the community may enforce *legal righteousness* on the citizen but can not enforce *virtuous conduct*. Taken in the

[17] That ability, which he calls 'wisedom and vertue' is the source of authority, which he calls 'dignitie,' is well illustrated by Elyot's account of and comments on the election of Numa Pompilius as King of the Romans (*The Governour*, 128).

reverse, the distinction serves to differentiate the great man and the authorized chief, if we remember that in practice the two may, from time to time, coincide.

To this position we have now come: Natural inequality among men creates a condition out of which the great man emerges. These in most fields of leadership, as in the arts for example, prove their right to lead by giving evidence of their ability. The man whose greatness depends upon the authority in him vested is not a Great Man. In this investigation we shall not, therefore, concern ourselves with the leader who derives his power from the Hegelian *civic righteousness*. With this limitation made, we may now proceed to ask: What is the quality or essence of the genuine Great Man—known also as Hero, Leader, Superior Man?[18]

[18] This question has been put in another connection by the critical pen of Lord Morley. 'It was said to a great English statesman of our days "You have so lived and wrought as to keep the soul alive in England." This is something, after all, apart from the clauses of his bills. It is a something that may be almost as good as everything. To leave out or lessen personality would be to turn the record of social development into a void. The genius of Comte produced a reasoned list of the heroes and benefactors of mankind, of which it has been justly said by the most eminent opponent to Comte's constructive system, that a more comprehensive and catholic sympathy and reverence toward every kind of service to mankind is not to be met with in any other thinker. . . . Each is connected in place and work with the other. That is a very different thing from the adoration of cloud-compelling giants. It is very different, too, from that attachment to the name and person of a teacher and inspirer, which is one of the most beautiful traits in human character. Select them as you will, in whatever realm of thought, action, or creation, whether from five hundred or five, the first question, and in one sense the last, is, what does your hero personify?' (*Politics and History*, 66-7-8).

THE GREAT MAN DISTINGUISHED FROM THE ORDINARY MAN

It is obvious that the Great Man may differ from the ordinary man in degree of his gift or in kind. He may have more power of the same order or he may have power of a higher order. One or the other of those principles underlies all formulated statements of the theory of the Great Man. In cases where the conception is consciously maintained but not formulated, the basis is the same. George Bernard Shaw clearly believes that the Great Man differs in the degree of his power. 'All men, much more Julius Caesar, possess all qualities in some degree.'[19] John Milton, on the other hand, for all his objection to the principle that high gifts are entailed upon a man 'with his fortune to be king,'[20] as clearly believes that the Great Man possesses a higher order of power. For Milton, after raising the question 'what K. or Knight before the conquest might be chosen in whom to lay the pattern of a Christian Heroe,'[21] finds the poet's 'abilities, wheresoever they be found, are the inspired guift of God rarely bestow'd, but yet to some (though most abuse) in every nation.'[22] The poet that Milton conceived himself to be was made great by this special inspiration, which moreover added itself to the ordinary gifts.[23] La Bruyère in *Les*

[19] Notes to Caesar and Cleopatra, *Three Plays for Puritans*.
[20] *The Works of Milton*, iii, 343. [21] Ibid, iii, 145. [22] Ibid, iii, 146.
[23] Compare: 'Neither doe I think it shame to covnant with any knowing reader, that for some few yeers yet I may go on trust with him toward the payment of what I am now indebted, as being a work not to be rays'd from the heat of youth, or the vapours of wine, like that which flows from the pen of some vulgar Amorist, or the trencher fury of a riming parasite, nor to be obtained by the invocation of Dame Memory

Caractères distinguishes the Great Man from the mere uniformed hero and shows how in the author's opinion the latter may become the former. 'Le héros' is used of course in the conventional sense of an older day.

'Il semble que le héros est d'un seul métier, qui est celui de la guerre, et que le grand homme est de tous les métiers, ou de la robe, ou de l'épée, ou du cabinet, ou de la cour: l'un et l'autre mis ensemble ne pèsent pas un homme de bien.' And again, 'Dans la guerre, la distinction entre le héros et le grand homme est délicate: toutes les vertus militaires font l'un et l'autre; il semble néanmoins que le premier soit jeune, entreprenant, d'une haute valeur, ferme dans les périls, intrépide; que l'autre excelle par un grand sens, par une vaste prévoyance, par une haute capacité et par une longue expérience. Peutêtre qu'Alexandre n'étoit qu'un héros, et que César étoit un grand homme.'[24]

THE FUNCTIONING OF THE GREAT MAN'S POWER

Whether the Great Man differs from the ordinary man in kind or in degree of power is only one of the questions which arise concerning his essential character. A second and equally important question concerns the functioning of power of whatever sort. One of the commonplaces of our day makes much of the distinction between the virtue

and her Siren daughters, but by devout prayer to that eternall Spirit who can enrich with all utterance and knowledge, and sends out his Seraphim with the hallow'd fire of his Altar to touch and purify the lips of whom he pleases: to this must be added industrious and select reading, steady observation, insight into all seemly and generous arts and affaires, till which in some measure be compast, at mine own peril and cost I refuse not to sustain this expectation from as many as are not loath to hazard so much credulity upon the best pledges I can give them' (*The Reason of Church Government*, Bk. II, in *Works of Milton*, iii, 148-9).

[24] *Les Caractères:* 'Du mérite personnel.'

of doing and the virtue of being. Is the test of greatness what a man achieves or what he is?

This distinction has, however, no value in the work-a-day world, whatever use it have in the sciences of ontology or epistemology. If a man is, he does. It is not possible in the real world to isolate the personality. Being *is* doing. What is the ideal of being, supposing it possible to separate it? Is it psychological, a perfect intelligence perfectly functioning? Then it can not be isolated, for the essential condition of intellectual function is expression, if only to the intelligence itself. Practically expression will not stop there, but becomes apparent, at the least in the face of the silent, calm Prince Gautama, who by doing nothing—if to sit with crossed legs and folded hands be doing nothing—sets a world of men doing the same thing. In the real world consciousness and being are not the same thing. Or is the ideal of being, then, a moral ideal, a character regulating itself by a noble science of conduct? A science of conduct implies relationship with other men, hence doing. Or is the ideal of being personal, the mere radiation of a solar intensity, of vital force? Then here is action, doing. The Great Man can be great merely because of what he *is*. He must *be*, to be sure, before he can *do;* but it is equally true that if he *is* in any degree or kind, he can not but *do*. The Lama in *Kim*, the man anywhere who possesses his own soul, is an active force, be his intention never so passive.

We have then to consider how power functions. First of all, if ability is to be indicated by the achievement, it is

necessary to remind ourselves that there are good works and works of evil. In one sense at least the villain of a tragedy does more than the hero. And the enthusiasm for the villain as hero, which was no higher in the Elizabethan audience or in the Puritan who felt the lure of Satan as a character[25] than in the men who made of the exiled Napoleon a demi-god or in those who with the help of a little persecution of William Hohenzollern will raise a 'monarch to a martyr's name,' bids us be wary. We can not here study theories of the villain, nor is it possible—at least it would be confusing beyond the bounds of the present work to clarify—to attack the problem of the Great Man's ultimate motive.

The mere thinker who allows his thought to propagate itself is the most passive of Great Men. He may be a powerful leader, but he does not exhort. No Great Man could, I suppose, be more passive than William Shakespeare. Yet he has subjugated the world from a Bankside playhouse. The moment the thinker organizes his disciples, or fires them to organization in behalf of his doctrine, he moves into a sphere of action. When he sends preachers among the Gentiles he is already a pale Napoleon planning the domination of the lands and the people therein. The martyr for an idea is active to the extent of furnishing an example, say, to the citizens of Athens of a citizen obeying the laws. The Great Man may be a 'leveller.' What belongs to the few he makes the heritage of the many. Prometheus is the type, he brings

[25] Dryden pointed out that Milton would have achieved certain effects 'if the devil had not been his hero instead of Adam.'

down to men what the gods have and men have not. The type is the Shelleyan hero, diversely arrayed. And in the same class belong the more or less genuine levellers of literature and most rebels: the heroes of *Die Räuber* and of *The Borderers*, with Götz mit der eisernen Hand, Rob Roy, Robin Hood, Osorio, as well as the actual Robespierre, the actual Lenin, and such. The thinker who propagates his thought is leader and revealer; there are also innumerable leaders that direct general effort so as to influence others to promote progress. The Great Man of this class, as of others, may obviously be more or less great, may vastly, deeply promote material well-being and progress or only slightly. The achievement may come through a physical device, such as a cheap, 'dependable' automobile; through statement of a law, as that of conservation of energy, or the definition of rights in terms of duty; through discovery,as of the circulation of the blood; through organization, concentration, and distribution of effort or output. The leveller when he merely adds a device or instrument to the means by which men live may be called a promoter of material progress. So he is; Prometheus, however, is more, he is the protagonist of spiritual struggle.

The Revealer moves in the intellectual-and-spiritual world; the Promoter moves in the intellectual-and-material. Between these two worlds, astray in both, unable to secure with precision and economy of effort the end he seeks, moves the Leveller.

In reality, the Great Man may cut across these categories. Prometheus is the leveller, but as martyr he is

also the revealer, and as I have already pointed out he may properly be called the promoter of material progress. But in most cases the Great Man falls into one or the other group. Plato is the Revealer; Henry Ford the Promoter; Lenin the Leveller.

THE GREAT MAN'S FOLLOWING

One other consideration must detain us here. How does the Great Man procure the following? Does he lead in strong toils those who do not willingly go? Or does he charm with his piping an obedient train? A combination of the persuasion of personal allegiance with enforcement is also possible when men are to their Great Man

> as unthinking armies are
> To thoughtful leaders.

If, like Confucius, one recognizes no disturbance of the moral elements in the constitution of man, then the people move, as he imagined they would, to the virtue of their ruler as the grass bends to the wind.[26] This ideal state exists for a moment when a president sees his own wisdom reflected, 'a new light shining in the faces of the people,' or when, as Arthur cheered his Table Round, Queen Bellicent beheld

> From eye to eye thro' all their Order flash
> A momentary likeness to the King.

Here the quality of the leader—for the moment—dissolves the problem.

But what should Hermodorus have done? Heraclitus insists that 'The Ephesians would do well to hang them-

[26] *The Chinese Classics*, i, 105-6.

selves, every man of them, and to leave the city to beardless boys. For they banished Hermodorous, the best man of them all, declaring: We will have no best man among us; if there be any such let him go elsewhere and amongst other men.'[27] Should Hermodorus have enforced himself upon those Ephesians who cried out with one accord that they would not have him? If the able man is to force his service on his inferiors, *i.e.* if he is to impress a following, heroic wilfulness may often pass for heroic will. Or should he say simply: 'If the majority refuse my leading toward the truth, let some one else have the honor of leading them toward error. In the long run by merely giving up I shall have asserted my leadership'? One remembers that Hythloday is very unwilling to become a minister of state, considering he would lose his independence and his advice would never be heeded.

In this matter a thorough theory of leadership, of the Great Man, should make some provision.

SOME APPLICATIONS OF THIS METHOD OF ANALYSIS

Before I come to analyze Carlyle's theory of the Hero, I must make brief analyses of a number of other doctrines of leadership. Otherwise, my preliminary considerations might seem to be trained in a special fashion upon my subject and so lose their validity. And in order that these applications may be organically related to the whole project, I choose four notable statements of doctrines which belong to what may be called the 'fluid' sources of Car-

[27] 121st Fragment.

lyle's conception. We may have to touch upon them again; but they need not be reserved for treatment among the direct sources, since they lie in the background of the history of the idea. We must also beware of falling into the notion that these are all the statements of theories of great men. Others abound, all of them conscious, some perhaps vaguely formulated. The illustrative matter in the earlier section of this chapter gives some hint of their diversity. Take for an instance of the abundance of material, the Carolingian *Mirror for Princes*. The mirror reflects a perfect king, friend, and protector of the church, benevolent, pious, just, prudent, compassionate, the maintainer of peace and justice. In the ninth century there are at least five important examples of this type: *Via Regia* of Smaragdus, Abbot of St. Mihiel; *De Institutione Regia* of Jonas, Bishop of Orleans; *De Regis Persona et Regis Ministeris* and *De Ordine Palatii* of Hincmar, Archbishop of Rheims; *De Rectoribus Christianis* of Sedulius Scotus. If we review in our minds the history of guides to conduct from the *De Officiis* down, or the nature of the panegyric, or the tendency of biographers of eminent men to commit themselves to some conception of leadership, we must conclude that, let down our buckets where we may, we should draw up instances to our purpose. Such are not, however, sufficiently definite to require specific treatment as sources nor to permit analysis. The doctrines I find it most profitable to deal with here are those of Confucius, of the Hebrew Messianists, of Plato, and of Plutarch.

CONFUCIUS:
THE SUPERIOR MAN AND THE MAN OF TALENT

The conception of the Superior Man is found in *The Books of the Four Philosophers*.[28] The first of these, the *Lun Yu* or *Digested Conversations*, contains Confucius's idea in reasonable purity. The second and the third, *Great Learning* and the *Doctrine of the Mean*, being the work of disciples, are largely elaborations and commentaries. The fourth contains the works of Mencius and is, so far as the Superior Man is concerned, a practical projection of the principles laid down by Confucius.

In the *Lun Yu*, the Superior Man is repeatedly contrasted with the mean man, in quality, bearing, manners, influence.[29] Other passages, about twice as many in number, define the nature and conduct of the Superior Man without explicit comparison with the mean man.

Confucius began with a doctrine of potential moral equality. 'By nature, men are nearly alike; by practice, they get to be wide apart.'[30] Nevertheless there is also an inequality in general capacity. Confucius said:

Those who are born with the possession of knowledge are the highest class of men. Those who learn, and so, readily get possession of knowledge, are the next. Those who are dull and stupid, and yet compass the learning, are another class next to these. As to those who are dull

[28] See, for the authority of these works, *The Chinese Classics:* Prolegomena.

[29] *Chinese Classics*, I, Analects II, xii, xiii, xiv; IV, xi, xvi; VI, xi; VII, xxxvi; XVI, viii; XIII, xxvi, xiii, xxv; XIV, xxiv; XV, xxxiii; I XI xvi. [30] Ibid., *Analects*, XVIII, ii; see also Note 2.

and stupid and yet do not learn;—they are the lowest of the people.[31]

The value of these categories is enlightened by his own position, of which the Master said: 'I am not one who was born in the possession of knowledge; I am one who is fond of antiquity, and earnest in seeking it there.'[32] The great moral obligation of men in whatever class they find themselves is self-development.[33] Equality rests in the principles of each man by virtue of which he may act righteously, properly, humbly, and sincerely.[34] Each man to be superior must first in his degree acquire learning 'in order to reach to the utmost of his principles.'[35] Then he 'does what is proper to the station in which he is,'[36] and no emergency can drive him from his principles.[37]

A man becomes a Superior Man by fully meeting his obligation of self-development. No man can be a great man without having thus qualified himself. The Master said: 'Though a man have abilities as admirable as those of the duke of Chan, yet if he be proud and niggardly, these other things are really not worth being looked at.'[38] Not all men, however, who thus qualify themselves are great, for the great man must have talents or gifts.[39] He is known by his virtues or abilities. Indeed, a sage and a great man, being superior men to whose superiority talent is, so to speak, added, are together with the ordinances of

[31] Ibid., *Analects*, XVI, ix. [32] Ibid., *Analects*, VII, xix.
[33] Ibid., *Great Learning*, Text 6, 6; also *Doctrine of the Mean*, XXXIII, 2.
[34] Ibid., *Analects*, XV, cxvii. [35] Ibid., *Analects*, XIX, vii.
[36] Ibid., *Doctrine of the Mean*, XIV, i; also *Analects* XXVIII.
[37] Ibid., *Analects*, Bk. VIII, vi. [38] Ibid., *Analects*, Bk. VIII, xi.
[39] Ibid., *Analects*, VIII, v; also *Mencius*, Bk. I, Pt. ii, Ch. vii, 4.

Heaven, the three things of which the Superior Man stands in awe.[40]

Upon the Superior Man in his place and the man of talent in his place, the obligations of service and leadership devolve. The Superior Man 'cultivates himself so as to give rest to all the people.'[41] 'Those who have abilities train up those who have not.'[42] Men of talent are few[43] and difficult to find.[44] But since 'the superior man in everything uses his utmost endeavours,'[45] and since the man of talent to be great must be in the first place a superior man, each man of talent uses his abilities to considerable results. Sincerity caps all his virtues and abilities as the highest excellence.[46] Thus a man of talent becomes a great leader, for 'never has there been one possessed of complete sincerity, who did not move others.'[47] The Master said: 'He who exercises government by means of his virtue may be compared to the north polar-star, which keeps its place and all the stars turn toward it.'[48]

It appears therefore that the superior man himself is not the highest type of able man in the Confucian world; he is merely the ultimate development of the moral man. The true leader adds to the moral virtues of the superior man the intellectual virtue of abilities or talents.

[40] Ibid., *Analects*, XVI, viii, i.
[41] Ibid., *Analects*, XIV, xlv.
[42] Ibid., *Mencius*, Bk. IV, Pt. ii, Ch. vii.
[43] Ibid., *Analects*, XV, iii.
[44] Ibid., *Analects*, VIII, xx.
[45] Ibid., *Great Learning:* Commentary, II, 4.
[46] Ibid., *Doctrine of the Mean*, XXV, 1, 2, 3.
[47] Ibid., *Mencius*, Bk. IV, Pt. i, Ch. xiii, 3.
[48] Ibid., *Analects*, Bk. II, Ch. i.

THE HEBREW IDEAL LEADER: THE MESSIAH

The Messiah will at once seem to most a clear case of leadership. In discussing the Messiah we must restrict the field. With post-Christian conceptions among the Jews it is impossible, as it would be useless, to confront ourselves. They present no theory of genuine leadership. They depend, some from the ambiguous lore of the Talmud and some from Kabbalistic speculation. It is enough to remind ourselves that they accumulated into a long array of mock leaders, false Messiahs—from Simeon Bar-Kochba in the first century to Yankiev Leibowitz Frank in the eighteenth. The 'suffering Messiah' we may also exclude. It does not appear that the Jews ever considerably entertained the idea, till Jesus himself dwelt on it.[49] The element of prediction which is inseparable from the Messianic idea also does not concern us here. Expectation of a great man is within range of a theory of leader; prediction is not. This study must be limited to the historical conception of a great leader developed under the yearning for a deliverer[50] before the idea of a Messiah came to be applied to the unique Christ, the two words, each meaning 'the anointed' in its language, coalescing about the figure of Jesus.

The idea of a Messiah springs, according to the most acceptable doctrine, from God's covenant with David (2 Samuel vii, 8-17) and perhaps from the psalmist's praise of God for the covenant (Psalms lxxxix, 19-37).

[49] See Hastings, *Dictionary of the Bible* under *Messiah*. Reference is there made in this connection to Mark 8, 27 ff. and 10, 35-40; Matt. 20, 20-28.

[50] Note Cyrus, the deliverer in II Chron. 36, 22-23, and Isaiah 45.

The date of these events is before 1000 B. C. After many years the woman of Samaria spoke her beautiful sentence, filled with the hope of the Revealer: 'I know that the Messiah cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things' (John iv, 25). During the millenium that separates these, the best statements of the Messianic hope or conviction are to be found in one or two Psalms, in Isaiah, in Daniel, and in Micah. The composite form of Messiah thus developed has these elements: (1) he will be a descendant of David; (2) he will be the ideal king, his mind and action entirely in accord with the will of God; (3) he will be God's true representative on earth, through whom God will make good all his promises; (4) he will be one who will lead all men to honor the God of Israel and to respect Israel as God's people. To the general aspects of the Messiah here delineated nothing can be added from the Book of Daniel (see especially chapters viii and xii). Nor is there any significant quality of leadership emphasized in the Book of Micah. The source of his power is, to be sure, the Eternal: 'he shall stand and feed in the strength of the Lord' (Micah v, 4); but this may be included under (2) above. In Micah v, 2, one is 'to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.' There, it may be, the recurrence of the leader is implied. Behind all psalmic expressions (*e.g.* Psalms ii, 110) the assistance of God to the king that is to come is insisted on.

To Isaiah we must turn for anything like a theory of the great man within the vaguer general conception of the

Messiah. Religious fervor explains the leader, of course, as Immanuel, *i.e.* 'God with us' (Isaiah vii, 14). His main characteristic in this passage is his refusal of 'the evil,' his choosing 'the good.' By the power to know these, one from the other, he shall increase his government and effect endless peace with judgment and justice (Isaiah ix, 7). This man, upon whose shoulder the government shall be, shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty Father, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace (Isaiah ix, 6). These appellations are not very descriptive; we may draw more specific qualifications from Isaiah xi, 2-4. Upon the leader shall rest the spirit of the Lord which is wisdom and understanding, counsel and might, knowledge and fear of the Lord. He shall judge in no haste upon sense evidence but with righteousness and equity.[51] He is the 'elect' of God (Isaiah xlii, 1), he is God's 'servant.' Having the spirit of the Lord upon him, he is of higher authority than kings and princes. Him shall kings see and arise, princes shall worship him (Isaiah xl, 7). For 'how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace' (Isaiah lii, 7).

Such a leader shall have followers. He 'shall stand for an ensign of the people'(Isaiah xi, 10). 'The great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem' (Isaiah xxvii, 13). 'And it shall come to pass,

[51] The Paradisiac picture which follows this is a quite separate thing, included by the Prophet to vivify to his audience the results of perfect leadership.

that from one new moon to the other, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord' (Isaiah lxvi, 23). To this he shall bring his followers, through his gifts, to this acknowledgement of the 'primal eldest Fact.'

The relation of the follower to the leader needs one other comment. Among the Jews of old the devotion of the people to the anointed was sacred. For instance, David had cut off Saul's skirt. 'And he said unto his men, the Lord forbid that I should do this thing unto my master, the Lord's anointed, to stretch forth mine hand against him, seeing he is the anointed of the Lord' (1 Samuel xxiv, 6).

PLATO: THE PHILOSOPHER KING

Plato's conception of a leader of the highest type was a political one, that is, one of leadership in the state. In the *Phaedrus* he ranks men by pursuits as follows: (1) the philosopher, (2) the righteous king or warrior chief, (3) politicists, economists, and capitalists, (4) gymnasts and physicians, (5) prophets and priests, (6) poets and painters, imitative artists, (7) artisans and husbandmen, (8) sophists and demagogues, (9) tyrants. In the *Republic* (455) he tells us that men as well as women differ in capacity.

The first and second pursuits of men coalesce for Plato in the philosopher-king. The idea of a philosopher-king is set forth in the *Republic*, Books V and VI, and in *The Statesman*. In the latter the Platonic theory of monarchy, of the necessity of ideal and absolute monarchy, so closely

incloses the idea which is our concern that we shall have to be very careful not to fall into a consideration of pure politics.

The famous sentence reads:

> Until, then, philosophers are kings, or the kings and princes of this world have the spirit and power of philosophy, and political greatness and wisdom meet in one, and those commoner natures who follow either to the exclusion of the other are compelled to stand aside, cities will never cease from ill—no, nor the human race, as I believe—and then only will the one state have a possibility of life and behold the light of day (473).

Natures capable of the study of philosophy ought to lead; 'others who are not born to be philosophers . . . are meant to be followers rather than leaders' (474). In Socrates' time philosophers had no honor in the state; they were useless through the fault of those who did not use them. They should not, however, be expected to impress followers. 'The pilot should not humbly beg the sailors to be commanded by him. . . . The ruler who is good for anything ought to not ask his subjects to obey him.' Yet not all the blame lies with the followers; for there are many false philosophers, because of whom citizens have never come to know true philosophy, being by these introduced to 'a conventional imitation of philosophy, words without thoughts, systems which have no life in them' (XX).

Who then are these philosophers who are to rule the state (474)? The philosopher is a lover, not of a part of wisdom only, but of the whole; he is a lover of the vision of truth (475). Wisdom must be distinguished from opinion

(476-480). Such a man will come to have the knowledge of the truth (484), which shows him the eternal nature not varying from generation and corruption (485). He does not wander into the region of the many and the variable (434). He will need the quality of truthfulness: never will he intentionally receive falsehood (485). He will be absorbed in the pleasures of the soul, he will have no meanness in his character (485-486). In short, he has magnificence of mind and is the spectator of all time and all existence (486). The natural gifts upon which all this is to be developed are 'courage, magnanimity, apprehension, memory' (490). These natural gifts may be ruined by bad education (491). At best there are few so gifted; and this small number is reduced by the adverse condition of society (491-492).

'The science of the true king is royal science' (*Statesman* 259). We may take it that science here stands for the philosopher's equipment. Whoever possesses this knowledge, whether he happen to be a ruler or a private man, may be called royal (259). And a man who merely gives the commands of another can not be thought of as a king (261). Politics is the 'voluntary management of voluntary bipeds' and he 'who has this latter art of management is the true king and statesmen' (276). Elected kings and priests are by contrast politicians—Protean shapes ever changing their form and nature (291). In a manner the business of the true king is legislation; yet it were better that he should rule with an eye on the human divergencies than with a law on the human likenesses (294). The true ruler

is above law that is inherited from the past, and will adjust it to new conditions (296). He is not himself an agent, but rules over those who are able to act, after he takes the initiative; the king ought to know when to begin, and to seize the opportunities of action, whilst others execute his orders (305).

When the philosopher becomes king such will be the phenomenon. This is the highest type of great man set down by the way in the *Phaedrus*. He has the divine fire, too, this statesman, attributed to the whole tribe of poets. Says Socrates to Meno (99): 'Statesmen above all may be said to be divine and illuminated, being inspired and possessed of God, in which condition they say many grand things, not knowing what they say.' Virtue, indeed, is discovered in this dialogue to be an instinct given by God. Nor is it accompanied by reason, unless there may be supposed to be among statesmen any one who is also the educator of statesmen. 'And if there be such an one, he may be said to be among the living what Tiresias was among the dead, who "alone," according to Homer (of those of the world below), has understanding; but the rest flit as shades;' and he and his virtues in like manner will be a reality among shadows. Such is the greatest leader of men.

A simple application of these ideas occurs in the conclusion of the *Phaedrus*. Socrates to Phaedrus:

. . . Go and tell Lysias that to the fountain and school of the nymphs we went down, and were bidden by them to convey a message to him and to other composers of speeches

to Homer and other writers of poems, whether set to music or not; and to Solon and others who have composed writings in the form of political discourses which they would term laws—to all of them we are to say that if their compositions are based upon knowledge of the truth, and they can defend or prove them, when they are put to the test, by spoken arguments, which leave their writings poor in comparison of them, then they are to be called not only poets, orators, legislators, but are worthy of a higher name, befitting the serious pursuit of their life.

PLUTARCH: THE POLITICAL LEADER

By genius Plutarch was an artist; by inclination he was a politician. A later age disapproved the essentially political preoccupation of the *Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romanes* and added Plato, among others, to the list. Plutarch himself in the *Lives* ventures only once into other fields and upon that occasion explains that he is interested not in the 'works and writings' of his orators, but in 'their acts and deeds in the government of the commonwealth.'[52] The life work of his heroes consisted, as Mr. Wyndham points out,[52] '(1) in founding states, (2) in defending them from foreign invasion, (3) in extending their dominion, or (4) in leading political parties within their confines.' These all are works wrought by the leader. Plutarch's conception of this leader or able statesman is set forth in the *Lives*,

[52] *Life of Demosthenes*, *Life of Cicero*, *Comparison of Cicero with Demosthenes*. A thoughtful consideration of this matter is to be found in the Introduction by George Wyndham to the Tudor Translation Reprint of the *Lives*, 1895. Plutarch (Tudor Translation, ii, 240) finds great diversity between the contemplative and the civil life, and favors the latter. Also he explicitly prefers Lycurgus to Plato, for a royal form of government in practice is better than a republic in a book (i, 162-3).

especially in the pages devoted to the shadowy Lycurgus, in the *Pericles*, the *Phocion*, and in certain passages in the *Morals*. Sir Thomas North had at least a general sense of this when in his dedication 'to the most high and mighty princesse Elizabeth' he wrote: 'For amonge all the profane bookes, that are in reputation at this day, there is none (your highnes best knowes) that teacheth so much honor, love, obedience, reverence, zeale, and devotion to Princes, as these lives of Plutarch doe.'[53]

Plutarch speaks of two kinds of leaders: the great captain and the great lawgiver.[54] These cover the four classifications of service marked by Mr. Wyndham. The latter are equally covered by the qualifications of Lycurgus, who was born 'to rule, to command, and to give order.'[55] The great man performs these functions, 'as having in him a certaine naturall grace and power, to drawe men willingly to obeye him.'[55] More people willingly obey him for his virtue than for his authority.[56] Love and good will are stronger knots to tie men with than any compulsory law.[57] No man was ever more opposed to Democracy. When he was besought to establish a popular state in Lacedaemon, 'that the basest might have as great authoritie as the highest,' he crushed the very idea. 'Beginne (quoth he) to do it first in thine own house.'[58] He is all for monarchy.

[53] *Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romanes*, i, 4.

[54] Plutarch's *Morals*, i, 512. [55] *Lives*, i, 123. [56] Ibid., i, 121.

[57] Ibid., i, 161. 'Men commonly disdaine to obey those, which are not wise in commanding. So that the faithful obedience of the subjects, dependeth much upon the sufficient commaundement of the wise prince. For he that directeth well, must needs be well obeyed.' Also Ibid, I, 135.

[58] Ibid., i, 146-7.

An able statesman . . . would not . . . choose any other but monarchy or regal authority, as being that which is indeed alone able to support that most perfect and lofty note of virtue, with suffering him either by force or by grace and favor, to frame himself for advantage or gain.

If the able statesman finds himself in an oligarchy or in a popular state, he will contrive to secure to himself this regal authority, 'for all sorts of governments do in a manner as much rule a statesman as he does them.'[59]

The 'certaine naturall grace and power' Plutarch again and again seems to regard as superhuman. For Pericles he does not think the surname 'Olympius (as to saye, divine or celestiall)'[60] too proud or arrogant a name. He thinks it 'some divine thing in Numa . . . as it was in Lycurgus' that brought them to their achievements.[61]

CONCLUSION

By way of testing the formula worked out in preliminary discussion I have analyzed four conceptions of the great man. From the fact of human inequality, we saw, emerges the fact of leadership. It is the function of the leader to act, sometimes as the revealer of spiritual truth, sometimes as the promoter of material progress, sometimes as the leveller of unequal conditions in favor of the incompetent and abused. The material used currently in determining this formula is in nearly every instance part of the great float of solution from which later theories of leadership crystallized. But by its nature this material affords no valid test of the formula as a whole. I have therefore turned to a complete survey of certain suitable cases.

[59] Plutarch's *Morals*, v, 398. [60] *Lives*, ii, 48. [61] Ibid., i, 206.

These four are all from the ancient world. In the first, a Chinese sage set up a doctrine of conduct within a world in which talented men govern men who are merely good. In the second, the Hebrews evolved a religious ideal of a revealer and a deliverer. Greek conceptions are one the ideal of a philosopher poet, the other the ideal of a politician. All will in the end prove significant as source material. The analyses themselves seem to have tested the validity of the preliminary considerations and to have prepared the way for an intensive study of Carlyle's theory of the hero, its sources, origins, and influence on Carlyle's writing.

CHAPTER II

CARLYLE'S THEORY OF THE HERO

A mere statement of the theory as Carlyle conceived it will not suffice. For his theory was an assimilation of many elements gathered from a prodigious reading into a new unity. After the elements have been as exactly as possible marked out, we may proceed to note step by step the development and unifying of these in the writings which precede 1840.

Behind this evolution in Carlyle's own mind lie the ultimate sources; among others, a great fluid body of doctrine of which Machiavelli's chief, Plutarch's politician, the Superior Man of Confucius, and the Hebrew Messiah are specimens:—as well as the subjective idealism of the German philosophers and their two methods of arriving at Truth, the Fichtean *Gelehrter*, Goethe's teachings to the young, eager Scot, the French Revolution with its train of ideas especially in the writings of some of the English poets; and finally the epic-mindedness of Carlyle himself.

The theory of the hero in this wise defined—by statement, analysis, and its own history—will appear an imperfect philosophy. The human situation set forth in the opening pages of this study does not receive in the statement of Carlyle a simplifying, ultimate interpretation. Faults of logic, defects in completeness mar the conception. These we shall most conveniently discover by close comparison of Carlyle's theory with that set forth by William

James. In the light of the deficiencies so revealed we may then turn to Carlyle's thirty volumes to discover, if possible, the effects for good and for bad of the hero obsession upon the writings of the man in whose mind it first came to such vivid life.

'LECTURES ON HEROES, HERO-WORSHIP, AND THE HEROIC IN HISTORY'

The book, *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History*, was printed during the first quarter of 1841. It had been written down in the published form between May 22, 1840, when the last of the lectures was delivered, and September 26, on which date he tells Emerson the work is done.[1] The six lectures themselves had been delivered in May, from the 5th to the 22nd. Before Carlyle went on the platform in Portman Square, he had been giving intense application to his lectures. Professor MacMechan has culled all the references to the work of those weeks.[2] On February 27, Carlyle writes to his brother John: 'I am beginning seriously to meditate my *Course of Lectures*, and have even, or seem to have got, the primordium of the subject in me,—tho' not nameable as yet.' On March 2, he writes: 'My subject for Lecturing on ought hardly yet to be *named*; lest evil befall it. I am to talk about gods, prophets, priests, kings, poets, teachers (six sorts of men); and may probably call it "On the Heroic."

[1] *Correspondence of Carlyle and Emerson*, i, 302. Froude says of the writing out of *Heroes:* 'On August 23, late in the afternoon, he had substantially finished his work.'

[2] MacMechan, *Heroes and Hero-Worship*, xxxvi.

Odin, Mahomet, Cromwell, are three of my figures; I mean to show that "Hero-worship *never ceases*," that it is at bottom the main or only kind of worship.' The final phase Professor MacMechan summarizes thus: 'On All Fool's Day he calls on Emerson to sympathize with him on his "frightful outlook" in having to give a course of lectures " 'On Heroes and Hero-Worship,'—from Odin to Robert Burns"; and on April 8, he announces the title in its present form, except for one word, and calls it "a great, deep, and wide subject, if I were in heart to do it justice." ' The announcement to which Professor MacMechan has reference is 'On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in Human History.'[3]

The year of publication therefore is not the true year of *Heroes*. The lectures and the book were conceived and executed in 1840. An analysis of the book, *Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History*, will reveal the state of the theory in that pivotal year.

THE THEORY

The Hero is but one element in the Carlyle Hero-Theory. Of equal importance and reciprocally related to this element is the quality of loyalty on the part of men. From the interplay of Hero and men results the variety of forms which the essential stuff of the Hero may take on. This is the skeleton of the theory.

What is the Hero?

The Hero is he who lives in the inward sphere of things, in the True, Divine, and Eternal, which exists always,

[3] *New Letters*, i, 190.

unseen to most, under the Temporary, Trivial: his being is in that; he declares that abroad, by act or speech as it may be, in declaring himself abroad. His life, as we said before, is a piece of the everlasting heart of Nature herself: all men's life is,—but the weak many know not the fact, and are untrue to it, in most times; the strong few are strong, heroic, perennial, because it cannot be hidden from them.[4]

The 'inward sphere of things,' implying a genuine reality under the apparent reality, is the condition of hero existence. Were there no world of semblances, of the 'Temporary, Trivial' overlying a world of Fact, 'the True, Divine, and Eternal,' there would be no hero. It is therefore our next task to define Carlyle's conception of the universe. We shall restrict ourselves for data to the book we are now considering.

CARLYLE'S CONCEPTION OF THE UNIVERSE

The conception is stated for us twice or three times with great explicitness in these lectures. Once we isolate those statements, a dozen other instances, equally explicit but subordinated to other purposes and therefore inwrought in the texture of the discourse, become surprisingly luminous.[5] The Northmen and Mahomet saw what all Heroic Men must see—'the Universe, definable always in one or the other dialect, as the realized thought of God' (92). To Carlyle 'This world is all but a show,—a phenomenon or appearance, no real thing.' And he quotes the line of which he was enamoured,

[4] MacMechan, *Heroes*, 179.
[5] MacMechan, *Heroes*, 12, 55, 91-92, 127, 133, 139, 237.

'We are such stuff as Dreams are made on!'[6]

'This so solid-looking material world is, at bottom, in very deed, Nothing; is a visual and tactual Manifestation of God's power and presence,—a shadow hung-out by Him on the bosom of the void Infinite; nothing more' (79). It is this that he means when he says: 'Nature is *preter*-natural; . . . Semblance is not Reality' (231).[7] Review now a few of the less separable passages. 'This body, these faculties, this life of ours, is it not all as a vesture for that Unnamed?' (12). 'All God's works are still in a sense symbols of God' (55). ' "The Divine Idea of the World, that which lies at the bottom of Appearance," as Fichte styles it; of which all appearance, from the starry sky to the grass of the field, but especially the Appearance of Man and his work, is but the *vesture*, the embodiment that renders it visible' (91-2). And finally: 'The nakedest savagest reality, I say, is preferable to any semblance, however dignified' (237).

Carlyle's world is thus a world of inner Reality or Truth and outer Semblance or Untruth. The 'great heart of the Universe' (71) is True and Eternal, because it is Divine; the audible, visible, tangible is Trivial, False, and Temporary for it is the passing vesture of what is within. This manifestation is a phantasm, phantasmagoria, welter of things, disorder; that inner fact is Reality, Truth, Order (173). 'The genuine essence of Truth never dies' (71). Like Islam, it is 'a Reality, direct from the great Heart of Nature' (73).

[6] Quoted again p. 127.

[7] 'Nature was to this man (the first Pagan thinker) what to the Thinker and Prophet it forever is, *preter*natural.' (9).

Such a world, provided some men are aware of the inner Reality while other men move merely in the outward sphere of things, presents itself as a colossal irony. The true significance of a word or an act is not apparent to the ordinary man. Like a character in a play, he has a very partial comprehension or none at all of the full meaning of what is said or done. Thorough comprehension is for one who understands all, as the spectator outside the play perceives the dramatic irony, as Fate outside the train of events fully appreciates all the implications of each event. This thorough comprehension, this understanding of the 'Real' or 'True' significance of utterance and deed is reserved to the able man, whom Carlyle calls Hero. The Hero is in this sense the spectator of the 'show of existence,' viewing it in the light of Divine Truth. When he interprets the 'show' to men in this light, it is as if a fully informed spectator should cry out warning to Duncan, bound for Inverness, that a deeper meaning lay in that most ghastly

> He that's coming
> Must be provided for.

It is as if the Spirit Sinister in *The Dynasts* were to make his explanations to the crawling figures that infest the map of Europe. In the gigantic irony of the world, the Hero is he who comprehends—and speaks or acts. The ordinary man, enmeshed in the complicated semblance of the 'show' will speak and act, but without comprehension.

THE HERO

Comprehension is not Carlyle's word. He has several to designate the quality. His system is not perfectly formu-

lated—its nomenclature not chosen—and he falls, first upon one word, then upon another, coming finally to conclude that no one word will do his service. Desperately, then, he equates all the words he has been using. And for us the result of all this will be that we shall have at first to seem over-elaborate in statement.

The Hero as Man of Letters is 'genuine' (178), he has an 'inspired soul' (178). 'I say *inspired;* for what we call "originality," "sincerity," "genius," the heroic quality we have no good name for, signifies that' (179). From the equation of these terms, by ranging significant passages we should be able to proceed to define the 'heroic quality' which I have tentatively named 'comprehension.' In presenting the matter some repetition is inescapable, for repetition is Carlyle's method.

In the first lecture the following data toward such definition are to be found. The Great Man is 'the light which enlightens, which has enlightened the darkness of the world; and this not as a kindled lamp only, but rather as natural luminary shining by the gift of Heaven; a flowing light fountain, as I say, of native original insight, of manhood and heroic nobleness' (2). To save the time from ruin, a man must be 'great enough, . . . wise and good enough': have 'wisdom to discern truly what the Time wanted, valour to lead it on the right road thither' (15). Odin, 'the first Norse Man of genius, . . . the great Thinker came, the *original* man, the Seer; whose shaped spoken Thought awakes the slumbering capability of all into Thought. It is ever the way with the Thinker, the spiritual Hero' (24).

Or what if this man Odin,—since a great deep soul, with the afflatus and mysterious tide of vision and impulse rushing on him he knows not whence, is ever an enigma, a kind of terror and wonder to himself,—should have felt that perhaps *he* was divine; that *he* was some effluence of the "Wuotan," "Movement," Supreme Power and Divinity, of whom to his rapt vision all Nature was the awful Flame-image; that some effluence of *Wuotan*[8] dwelt here in him (28-9). . . . Valour is the fountain of Pity too;—of Truth, and all that is great and good in man (40).

The Norse Religion[9] was 'a rude but earnest, sternly impressive *Consecration of Valour*' (46).

In the second lecture, that upon *The Hero as Prophet*, Carlyle is more explicit on this point of the heroic quality. Near the beginning he puts the matter in the idiom of an old theology, vaguely and perhaps a bit rhetorically:

The most precious gift that Heaven can give to the Earth; a man of 'genius' as we call it; the Soul of a Man actually sent down from the skies with a God's-Message to us (49).

Upon the second page following we find an elaborated statement:

I should say *sincerity*, a deep, great, genuine sincerity, is the first characteristic of all men in any way heroic. Not the sincerity that calls itself sincere; ah no, that is a very poor matter indeed;—a shallow braggart conscious sincerity; oftenest self-conceit mainly. The Great Man's sincerity is of the kind he can not speak of, is not conscious

[8] The significance of this word and of the italics depends upon an etymology set forth on p. 28: 'Let us consider it fixed that Wuotan means *Wading*, force of *Movement*.'

[9] Cf. 'Destiny . . . was a fundamental point for the Norse believer;—as indeed it is for all earnest men everywhere, for a Mahomet, a Luther, for a Napoleon too' (36).

of: nay, I suppose, he is conscious rather of *in*sincerity; for what man can walk accurately by the law of Truth for one day? No, the Great Man does not boast himself sincere, far from that; perhaps does not depend on himself; he cannot help being sincere! The great Fact of Existence is great to him. Fly as he will, he cannot get out of the awful presence of this Reality. His mind is so made; he is great by that, first of all. Fearful and wonderful, real as Life, real as Death, is this Universe to him. Though all men should forget its truth, and walk in a vain show, he cannot. At all moments the Flame-image glares-in upon him; undeniable, there, there!—I wish you to take this as my primary definition of a Great Man. . . .

Such a man is what we call an *original* man; he comes to us at first hand. A messenger he, sent from the Infinite Unknown with tidings to us. We may call him Poet, Prophet, God;—in one way or other, we all feel that the words he utters are as no other man's words. Direct from the inner Fact of things;—he lives, and has to live, in daily communion with that. Hearsays cannot hide it from him; he is blind, hopeless, miserable, following hearsays; *it* glares-in upon him. Really his utterances, are they not a kind of 'revelation';—what we must call such for want of some other name? It is from the heart of the world that he comes; he is portion of the primal reality of things (51-52).

Ten pages on, this primary definition is applied to Mahomet. Mahomet is

A silent great soul; he was one of those who cannot *but* be in earnest; whom Nature herself has appointed to be sincere. While others walk in formulas and hearsays, contented enough to dwell there, this man could not screen

himself in formulas; he was alone with his own soul and the reality of things (62).[10]

And, lest any have missed the essence of the new meaning injected into the word *sincerity*, there is immediately a new statement. 'A Hero, as I repeat, has this first distinction, which indeed we may call first and last, the Alpha and Omega of his whole Heroism, that he looks through the shows of things into *things*' (63). The Hero's 'eye that flashes direct into the heart of things, and *sees* the truth of them' is 'Great Nature's own eye'; 'Benthamism is an *eyeless* Heroism,' and therefore not Heroic at all (199). Rousseau with all his drawbacks has something of the heroic in that 'he is heartily *in earnest*' (213); Johnson's words 'are sincere words,' there are in his books 'the indisputable traces of a great intellect and a great heart' (210). In the latter he implies that 'depth' and 'width . . . calm force for difficulty; the first characteristic of true greatness' which Rousseau had not (212). Burns is once a 'giant Original Man!' (216). He had 'a noble rough genuineness' (218); 'but if we look at his general force of soul, his healthy *robustness* everyway, the rugged downrightness, penetration, generous valour and manfulness that was in him,—where shall we readily find a better-gifted man' (220)? Burns is much like Mirabeau: 'The characteristic of Mirabeau too is veracity and sense, power of true insight, superiority of vision' (220). But 'the chief quality of Burns is the *sincerity* of him' (221).

[10] Cf. p. 63: 'The great Real standitys glaring there upon *him*' (Mahomet) and p. 64: 'That God is great; and that there is nothing else great! He is the Reality.'

Cromwell, in his turn, 'has a genuine insight into what *is* fact. . . . Fact answers, if you see into Fact! Cromwell's *Ironsides* were the embodiment of this insight of his'(247). He had an intellect (247), and 'Intellect is not speaking and logicizing; it is seeing and ascertaining' (251). He had 'Virtue, *Vir-tus*, manhood, *hero*-hood' (251). Napoleon's sincerity was far inferior to that of Cromwell (274), yet he '*had* a sincerity . . . a certain instinctive ineradicable feeling for reality; and did base himself upon fact, so long as he had any basis' (275).

Before we draw a definition from these passages, we must first dispose of one or two confusions which arise from Carlyle's use of words in two senses. Take first, the word *original*. This word in all the preceding passages is used in the sense of 'having access to the great Original Reality,' as 'an original man; he comes to us at first hand.' But once at least Carlyle trips over this into another meaning.

> It is [he says] not necessary a man should himself have *discovered* the Truth he is to believe in, and never so *sincerely* to believe in. A Great Man, we said, was always sincere, as the first condition of him. But a man need not be great in order to be sincere; that is not the necessity of Nature and of all Time, but only of certain corrupt unfortunate epochs of Time. A man can believe, and make his own, in the most genuine way, what he has received from another;—and with boundless gratitude to that other! The merit of *originality* is not novelty; it is sincerity. The believing man is the original man; whatsoever he believes, he believes it for himself, not for another. Every son of Adam can become a sincere man, an original man, in this sense (144).

The last phrase suggests that the author may be aware of the change of meaning; in any case it is a change, not to be harmonized.

The sentences just quoted involve another double use. This one is explicable. Sincerity is 'the first characteristic of all men in any way heroic'; but, as in the passage just quoted, sincerity is also a possible condition for all men. Indeed, Carlyle conceives of all men as having the capacity for sincerity. Now, in spite of Carlyle's assertion, sincerity is not the Hero's *first* characteristic; that the facts nowhere support: his first characteristic is that he dwells 'in the inward sphere of things.' But as a result of that contact with 'Reality' he cannot help being sincere. The ordinary man however may fail to believe sincerely or to act genuinely. Put the case thus: when the Hero ceases to be sincere, he ceases to be a Hero; when a man ceases to be sincere, he is still a man. The Hero's sincerity, then, comprehends truth of insight plus ineluctable 'veracity' of conduct.[11] The ordinary man's sincerity is loyalty to the best he can perceive above him—namely a Hero. The 'seeing eye,' which nature bestows on all (78, 179), has also a double meaning. In the head of a Hero it sees into Reality; in the head of an ordinary man it sees a Hero, who is a 'piece of Reality,' Reality made visible to the unintellectual, as it were. The 'seeing eye' he calls 'sincerity of vision; the test of a sincere heart' (78). Hence Carlyle could say: 'the sincere man was by nature the obedient man' (206). And hence he arrives at his pun upon *hierarchy*. A Hero-archy is a world in which the 'True and Good' reverence 'the

[11] Cf. 'veracity, a natural spontaneity in forms' (236).

truly Better' who have insight into the always reverable Reality (146). If men had not sincerity of the due sort, they follow quacks or mere simulacra of great men, for 'the insincere, unbelieving world is the *natural property* of the Quack' (249).

It is upon this double use of 'sincere,' which in fact has confused the unsystematic author himself, that the conception of a World of Heroes is based. The choice of Knox, upon this basis, out of the family tree of Jane Welsh is dubious business. Carlyle himself does not find in him that glare of insight into Reality which he everywhere else requires. He 'is an instance to us how a man, by sincerity itself, becomes heroic: it is the grand gift he has. We find in Knox a good honest intellectual talent, no transcendent one' (171). Yet it is precisely on this 'transcendent' intellectual talent that Hero-ship rests. The illustration is preposterous. Carlyle's discomfort in his own effort is plain. For instance on page 167, within sight of the end of the lecture he still is not satisfied with his resolution of the difficulty. He tries again:

> The meanest man becomes not a Citizen only, but a member of Christ's Visible Church; a veritable Hero, if he proves a true man! Well, this is what I mean by a whole "Nation of Heroes," a *believing* nation. There needs not a great soul to make a hero; there needs a god-created soul which will be true to its origin; that will be a great soul.

Though we ignore the inconsistency (it cannot be design) of capitalizing hero in one case and not in another, there seems to me but one concluson to draw. It is this. Carlyle uses *sincere* in two senses without having formulated his

usage. Thus he betrays himself, as it seems to him, into a curious incompatibility. In his effort to harmonize matters, he commits the extra error we have just quoted. The World or Nation of Heroes itself is merely a picturesque phrase for the logical fact of a world of sincere men, in the sense I have defined.

Further, before we seek to define the Hero, we must throw upon the central figure what light may be had from Carlyle's idea of the difference between the Hero and the ordinary man. His general principle is that 'the degree of vision that dwells in a man is the correct measure of the man' (121). For all men long to do high and right things. It is . . . to do noble and true things, and vindicate himself under God's Heaven as a god-made man, that the poorest son of Adam dimly longs. Show him the way of doing that, the dullest daydrudge kindles into a hero' (81). But the poorest daydrudge has not the vision, the Intellect, to know what is a 'true thing,' even if he can compass the doing of it. For 'to know: to get into the truth of anything, is ever a mystic act,—of which the best Logics can but babble on the surface' (65-6). And the implication that Logic belongs to little, ordinary men and Insight to great, heroic men is in every page of the Hero lectures. The distinction between these two processes—that of the logical Understanding and that of the penetrating Reason—came, as we shall see, again and again to the utterance in Carlyle's earlier work, and had by 1840 grown into his philosophic outlook, for better and for worse. In the lectures, even Bacon comes off only among 'the best Logics.' 'Novum Organum, and all the intellect you will find in

Bacon, is of a quite secondary order; earthy, material, poor in comparison with this' (120). But Napoleon with all his quackeries is among the Intellects (with capital *I*), the sincere man (in the special sense). The *savans* had proved one evening in that voyage to Egypt 'to their satisfaction, by all manner of logic' that there could be no God. 'Napoleon, looking up into the stars, answers, "Very ingenious, Messieurs: but *who made* all that?" The Atheistic Logic runs-off from him like water; the great Fact stares him in the face' (275). The ordinary man may be the dullest daydrudge or a savant in that voyage to Egypt —he is not a Hero, for he lacks this mystic awareness of 'the great Fact.'

The difficulty which, as I have already pointed out, Carlyle had in maintaining himself consistently in his chosen point of view, is very evident from another passage. The passage is valuable to us here, too, in preparing to draw up a definition of the Hero upon the basis of the lectures and book of 1840. The passage is that one in which the idea is put forth that, 'we are all poets when we *read* a poem well. The "imagination that shudders at the Hell of Dante," is not that the same faculty, weaker in degree, as Dante's own?' The next step: 'A man that has *so* much more of the poetic element developed in him as to have become noticeable, will be called Poet by his neighbors.' The final step: 'One who rises *so* far above the general level of Poets will, to such and such critics, seem a Universal Poet. . . . All Poets, all men, have some touches of the Universal; no man is wholly made of that' (93-4). These sentences are clearly grounded upon a theory that

great men differ from ordinary men in the degree of their faculty,—which is precisely the theory Carlyle appears elsewhere to have set himself against. That those sentences could crop out at this point is proof beyond all question that the Hero conception is not only not a systematic philosophy but hardly even a thorough formulation. Otherwise they would have been deleted, or at least altered, before the idea with which the paragraph following concludes:

> If your delineation be authentically *musical*, . . . then it will be poetical. . . . Musical, how much lies in that! A musical thought is one spoken by a mind that has penetrated into the inmost heart of the thing; detected the inmost mystery of it, namely the *melody* that lies hidden in it; the inward harmony of coherence which is its soul, whereby it exists (94-5).

In other words, a Poet has the gift of Insight, or whatever we may call it.

A brief definition of the Hero as he appears in the lectures of 1840 is now possible. The Hero is the gift of Heaven, a Force of Nature (129), sent by Nature (89). His essential quality is original Insight (2). Insight into the great Original Fact of Existence brings Belief in the Fact, disbelief in Semblances. Indeed, Insight and Belief are identical, since the Hero is aware of Truth which under the compulsion of his quality he cannot but believe in. And, inasmuch as he can not escape the inner Reality of the world, he is bound to a non-conscious Sincerity of speech and action in thorough-going accordance with the Reality. This Insight may be called Vision; it may be called In-

tellect. Sincerity may be designated Earnestness. The Sincerity of the Hero is therefore absolute, for it is based upon unalterable truth correctly apprehended; whereas the sincerity of ordinary men is veracity of word or conduct based upon a logically, and therefore at best partially or even faultily, apprehended universe. The ordinary man's sincerity is consequently relative, since he looks merely on things and not into them. Veracity in speech and action he may have; but not truth of insight.

To the Hero, so understood, Carlyle gives many names as he passes. He is the Great Man (1, 18), Man of Genius (11), Seer (24), Thinker (24), Inventor (32), Teacher (55), Leader of Worship (133), a True Son of Nature and Fact (164), a Great Soul (177), Genuine Man (204), Original Man (205). Each has its direct reference, obvious enough, to the idea set forth in the preceding paragraph. Many instances too are cited in addition to those treated in disquisition. Beside the array 'from Norse Odin to English Samuel Johnson,' there is a shadowy line, seen as it were in witches' mirrors, 'from the divine Founder of Christianity to the withered Pontiff of Encyclopedism,'[12] from the highest instance immolated amid earthquake and awful silence upon Calvary to the lowest smothered under roses in the streets of Paris.

Under whatever name, of whatever degree, functioning in whatever mode, the Hero performs certain practical

[12] 'The greatest of all Heroes is One—whom we do not name here! Let sacred silence meditate that sacred matter; you will find it the ultimate perfection of a principle extant throughout man's whole history on earth' (13).

services. Great Men 'were the leaders of men: . . . the modellers, patterns, and in a wide sense creators, of whatsoever the general mass of men contrived to do or to attain' (1, 2). 'Every true Thinker . . . teaches men *his* way of thought, spreads a shadow of his own likeness over sections of the History of the World' (39, cf. 33). 'What he teaches, the whole world will do and make.' And he teaches—his very way of thought is—the divine mystery (92), the Great Reality (132-3).

ORDINARY MEN

We have now to concern ourselves with the men who are led or taught. Those men have as their primary characteristic what Carlyle names Loyalty (*e.g.* 13), or Reverence for Great Men (17), Admiration (13, 16, 96). The faculty, the necessity to reverence Heroes when sent (232) is 'an obedience which knows no bounds' (5), it is a quality in men by virtue of which they worship Heroes, fall in 'heartfelt, prostrate admiration, submission, burning, boundless, for a noblest godlike Form of Man' (13, cf. 17). What is Faith to 'some inspired Teacher, some spiritual Hero' (13), that is Loyalty to all Heroes. Not all men are capable of this loyalty. For 'the sincere alone can recognize sincerity' (249); he has the 'seeing eye.' A *valet* will not know a Hero when he sees him (249), nor will a sceptic (239). 'The sincere man was by nature the obedient man' (206). Loyalty, indeed, is a mystical bond—'the divine relation . . . which in all times united a great man to other men' (2). When men are absorbed in 'the Semblances,' the Hero recalls them from their Idolatry to the Reality

to Truth. Loyalty to the Hero is then Loyalty to the Eternal; it is more, it is acquiescence in the divine plan.

RELATIONS OF HERO AND ORDINARY MEN

Of these loyal men, Carlyle in the Hero lectures has, however, two practically contradictory things to say. The word of Mahomet 'is a Voice direct from Nature's own Heart. Men do and must listen to that as to nothing else' (62). 'The World *has* to obey him who thinks and sees in the world' (222). Contrast with this assurance that the world of men will inevitably worship the Hero these passages from *The Hero as King*. 'Not a Hero only is needed, but a world fit for him; a world not of *Valets;*—the Hero comes almost in vain to it otherwise' (249)! 'That a true *King* be sent them is of small use; they do not know him when sent. They say scornfully, Is this your King? The Hero wastes his heroic faculty in bootless contradiction from the unworthy; and can accomplish little' (248). This problem of how the Hero gets his following or, conversely, how the following discovers its Hero, is, as we shall presently see, a source of great trouble to Carlyle.[13]

Meanwhile, there is to be considered another phase of the relationship of men and Heroes. A reciprocal effect depending upon the elements already defined is the most characteristic feature of the doctrine of Heroes and Hero-Worship. From the interplay of the Hero and the need of a world of loyal men springs the Protean aptitude of the Hero. That the stuff of which all great men come is intrinsically the same stuff (2, 132, 179) is implied in the

[13] See below, chapter vi, *Some Criticisms of Carlyle's Doctrine*.

definition of Hero. All sorts of Heroes have a common source of Truth (91). 'For at bottom the Great Man, as he comes from the hand of Nature, is ever the same kind of thing: Odin, Luther, Johnson, Burns; I hope to make it appear that these are all originally of one stuff!' (49). More than this, Carlyle has 'no notion of a truly great man that could not be *all* sorts of men' (90). The guise in which the Hero performs his function is not determined by the fact of his existence. The variety of shapes in which this essential Hero-stuff appears results from the need of the world into which it comes. 'Hero can be Poet, Prophet, King, Priest, or what you will, according to the kind of world he finds himself born into' (90), 'the time and environment he finds himself in' (132).[14] The Great Man can be any sort of man,—not *can* of his own volition as Feathertop, the critic, has supposed; but could have been 'had his course of life and education led him thitherward' (90). A man's course of life is the road his environment forces him to follow; his education is the discipline and enlightenment which his environment affords. And since environment is in part the pressure of men upon man, it is clear that the effect of men upon the Great Man leads him to his Heroic role. Carlyle has one excellent illustration of this pressure and its results. Whether the Poet

write at all; and if so, whether in prose or in verse, will depend on accidents: who knows on what extremely trivial

[14] 'True, that are aptitudes of Nature too. . . . Varieties of aptitude doubtless; but infinitely more of circumstances; and far oftenest it is the *latter* only that are looked to' (90). Carlyle's grudging admittance of a fact he could not blind himself to, try as he would. Or had some friend—Mill, say—protested after the first or second lecture?

accidents,—perhaps on his having had a singing-master, on his being taught to sing in his boyhood! But the faculty which enables him to discern the inner heart of things, and the harmony that dwells there . . . , is not the result of habits or accidents, but the gift of Nature herself (120-1).

The Hero will not, however, be directed only by the more salient pressures of men but by the great, unseen mystical need of men. He discerns 'truly what the Time wanted,' and leads 'it on the right road thither' (15). If men yearn to know that at the heart of Nature is Beauty (137), 'that such a thousand-fold hidden beauty and divineness dwells in all Nature' (127), the Hero becomes Poet and sings; if men need to be told that there is an Eternal Verity behind all sectarianism and skepticism, then the Hero becomes Prophet and proclaims the awful God, or a Priest, 'the Uniter of them with the Unseen Holy' (132). Thus the pressure—the need—of a world of men diversifies the form which the essential Hero assumes. Finally, one must note that Carlyle did not limit the types of Hero to the six which he chose under the exigencies of his program of lectures. He mentions the Hero Painter (11), the Hero-Cavalier (Montrose) (234), and at the opening of the third lecture after reviewing his types, Divinity, Prophet, Poet, he adds: 'We might give many more names, on this same principle' (89).

With the Hero thus mutable, with men thus loyal, Hero-worship is eternal (16, 17, 233), 'can not cease till man himself ceases' (14). Reverence for heroism is indestructible (98), and it exists everywhere (233). Loyalty and Sovereignty are everlasting in the world (145). Hero-worship

is 'the everlasting adamant lower than which the confused wreck of revolutionary things cannot fall. . . . It is an eternal corner-stone, from which they can begin to build themselves up again' (17).

The conception of the Hero-Theory here discussed is drawn from *Heroes and Hero-Worship* (1840). As appears in the analysis and as indeed no one who has ever read the book need be reminded, *Heroes and Hero-Worship*—the printed book made out of the spoken lectures—is disfigured by intemperance of exposition.[15] For example, ten years before the lectures were delivered Carlyle had written: 'History is the essence of Innumerable Biographies'[16] —that is of Goethe, Voltaire, and Boswell's 'woman of the town,' and also Young's 'poor woman' climbing the hill. But under the stress of the idea which inhabited his title, in 1840 he excludes the lowly. 'The History of the world is but the biography of great men' (2, 15, 33). Again, although Carlyle had decent respect for Bentham, as his apology (198) clearly shows, he aspersed Benthamism most immoderately in the lecture on Mahomet (87), though 'without prior purpose' (198). Once more and finally, one has only to review the cases of enthusiastic overstatement which strike even on a first reading. 'A Hero is a Hero at all points,' we read on page 32, and in the fifth lecture we find Rousseau is a hero, but not at all points, and that

[15] I am well aware that Carlyle's method was not extemporaneous; but a careful reading of Professor MacMechan's scholarly account of the process of getting up the lectures will satisfy any doubter of the distinction I am here making. See MacMechan, xxxvii, liv, lv.

[16] *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays*, Essay on *History*, ii, 170. Essay on *Biography*, iii, 38.

Napoleon also had his Achilles' heel. Such exaggeration was for Carlyle inseparable from oral discourse. Every conversation reported out of Cheyne Row is marked by it, even at third hand. Carlyle, moreover, makes his instances 'striking' for he is fighting Dryasdust no less than the detractors of Cromwell and Mahomet, and the scientific historian. Hyperbole and its kind were his natural weapons.

For this inevitable exaggeration, deduction may be made by a close study of the earlier statements of the Hero, and whatever other elements appear. Such a study will also, as I have already pointed out, throw light upon Carlyle's developing thought in one of the departments to which he gave most attention.

CHAPTER III

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE THEORY IN CARLYLE'S WRITINGS BEFORE 1840

'If I could show in any measure, what I feel deeply for a long time now, that [Hero-Worship] is the vital element of Manhood, the soul of man's history here in this world!' Carlyle said to his 'audience of intellect and beauty' in May, 1840. That he had felt this in first an inchoate outreaching fashion before he finally thought it in the fairly thorough-going formulation already set forth, there is much proof. The Hero-Theory was a slow growth, widely and richly nourished. It found statement in earlier years, and even before 1840 marked some important pieces of work. To trace its growth and force in those years is our next task. Afterward we may seek the sources of nourishment, when our account of the development reveals to us the nexus of each influence.

In tracing this development an eye must be kept on Carlyle's theory of biography and history, which, says Professor Perry, was 'capable of being turned into a theory of conduct.' 'All art of portrayal depends upon preliminary imaginative insight; . . . the secret of insight is sympathy. To find your man, to love him, then to paint him as he is: this is the law—Carlyle thought—for all truly creative work in biography and history.'[1] As a theory of conduct this literary law will be found to be nearly identical with the Hero theory. Insight and Reverence and a Man—these are common to both.

[1] Bliss Perry, *Carlyle: How to Know Him*, 14, 16.

Carlyle's first written work, with the exception of letters, lies buried in three volumes of Sir David Brewster's *Edinburgh Encyclopedia*. There are seventeen articles, under M, N, and P.[2] Even Nelson, among a dozen names, does not draw from Carlyle a hint of special doctrine. The writer is critical, but has no doctrine, one would say. Nelson had 'a mind, gifted with the most acute penetration, the loftiest ardour, the most inflexible determination. . . . Whoever inspects his history minutely, will find in it traces of a spirit possessing a higher and more general species of excellence.' Necker 'betrayed a want of the firmness essential to a great man.' At the end of the essay on Nelson, the great seaman is acclaimed hero, in small capitals. The word is doubtless used in the conventional sense, but the capitals grope toward an emphasis that is more than rhetorical.

The contributions to Brewster's were probably written at intervals from 1820 to 1823. In 1821 a review of Joanna Baillie's *Metrical Legends*[3] contained one sentence which foreshadowed the theory of biography. 'The poet must be able,' wrote Carlyle, ' . . . not merely to estimate his hero, but to transfuse his own being into him—to see with his hero's eyes and feel with his hero's heart.' The first paragraph of the essay on *Biography* (1832) did not much alter this.

[2] R. H. Shepherd (*The Bibliography of Carlyle*, 1881) gives only sixteen. So many are assigned to Carlyle in the general attribution. The omission of the article on *Montucla* (signed T. C.) is surprising in Shepherd. *Dictionary of National Biography* perhaps copies Shepherd: there (iii, 1034) *Montucla* is also omitted. Several other articles may, I think, be proved to be Carlyle's, at a better time and place. The *Montucla* is hesitatingly attributed to Carlyle, I find, in an appendix of *Montaigne and Other Essays, mostly Literary*, London, 1897.

[3] *New Edinburgh Review*, Oct. 1821, i, 393-414.

Even before the article work for Brewster ceased, Carlyle had begun the *Life of Schiller*, which appeared in three installments in the *London Magazine*, October, 1823, January, and July to September, 1824. At the very outset the *Life of Schiller* crystallized Carlyle's theory of biography. 'It would at once instruct and gratify us if we could understand him thoroughly, could transport ourselves into his circumstances outward and inward, could see as he saw, and feel as he felt.'[4] His keen, reasonably informed analysis of 'Kantism' (95-100) shows no special sympathy with the transcendental doctrine which was later to be the basis for expanding this idea into a philosophy of conduct. He makes (98) no living distinction between logic and the principles of reasoning which 'are apparently not those of common logic.' In the discussion of the great figures central in Schiller's dramas, he betrays only once the slightest foreknowledge of the Hero concept or terminology. In Tell (154) lies 'a deep, reflective, earnest spirit, thirsting for activity'; in his character 'all is native, all is genuine'; Tell draws his motives 'from the everlasting instincts of Nature.' The anticipation is probably in part owing to accident, in part to a groping consciousness of a fact. The remarkable analysis of Schiller's mind with which the *Life* ends reveals more forecastings. No formula underlies it. Nevertheless, there are sentences and phrases that closely resemble what all the world is familiar with in the book of 1840. Schiller 'had a mind of the highest order'; he 'would have been no common man, though he had altogether wanted the qualities peculiar to poets. His in-

[4] *Life of Friedrich Schiller*, 2.

tellect is clear, deep, and comprehensive.' The 'living shapes' of his writings 'address faculties far finer than the understanding.' This seems to indicate that the distinction between reason and understanding with which Carlyle's intellect dealt somewhat indifferently, was finding a subconscious congeniality. As perhaps does also his assertion that 'delight in the products of reason and imagination can scarcely ever be divided from, at least, a love for virtue and genuine greatness.'[5] Schiller, moreover, had 'that sincerity of heart and mind, for which the Germans are noted' and 'no man ever . . . performed great works with less consciousness of their greatness' (168 ff.). When all such straws are accumulated, one says to oneself again: No formula of the problem of conduct is in the author's mind. A literary theory he clearly works by, but no special philosophy colors his work. The facts as he sees them are put down; there is no compelling thesis. When he wrote the *Life of Schiller* Carlyle was still the positive critic; a ritual he had, but of dogmata none.

The translation of Wilhelm Meister's *Lehrjahre* was published in 1824. The *Wanderjahre* translation, published originally in the compilation named *German Romance*, was introduced by a short account of Goethe, probably written after the translation was complete (just before publication), in 1827. From it one draws confirmation of a sentence in Garnett's excellent *Life*. Even in the specific his-

[5] Cf. 'the creative power . . . has been given by nature in complete perfection to no man, nor entirely denied to any' (Schiller, 170) with 'All Poets, all men, have some touches of the Universal; no man is wholly made of that' (*Hero As Poet*, 95).

tory of the Theory of the Hero this 'translation marks the dividing line between his intellectual boyhood and his adolescence.'[6] Witness these passages. Goethe

> is king of himself and of his world; nor does he rule it like a vulgar great man, like a Napoleon or Charles Twelth, by the mere brute exertion of his own will, grounded on no principle, or on a false one; his faculties and feelings are not fettered and prostrated under the iron sway of Passion, but led and guided in kindly union under the mild sway of Reason.[7]

He is no German Voltaire, as he has been called, for Voltaire was 'the *cleverest* of all past and present men; but a great man is something more' (348). 'A high and original mind' 'may at all times calculate on much sorriest criticism' from a man who had no doubts of 'the compass of his own vision.' Consequently, 'in looking at an extraordinary man, it were good for an ordinary man to be sure of seeing him, before attempting to *oversee* him' (349):

> For the rest, if it seems that I advocate this cause too warmly; that Goethe's genius, whether it be good or bad, is in truth a very small concern to us, I may be allowed to remind my readers, that the existence or non-existence of a great Poet for the World in our own time, of a new Instructor and Preacher of Truth to all men, is really a question of more importance to us than many that are agitated with far greater noise (350):

Here, then, without a special terminology, still inchoate, is much of the Theory of the Great Man. We observe a phenomenon of a crescent intellect.

[6] Garnett, *Life*, 32. [7] *Essays*, i, 345.

The Preface to *German Romance* and the Introductions to other authors in the collection add nothing to these data; unless, remembering that Carlyle thought Hero-worship the tap-root of all religion, we see significance in this comment upon Richter! 'It is Religion, it is Belief, in whatever dogmas expressed, or whether expressed in any, that has reconciled for him the contradictions of existence' (336). Such a religion leads Richter to worship Nature, among whose beauties and solemnities he dwells, 'the great original of Peace, to whom the Earth and the fulness thereof belongs' (336). One might without straining see here the germ of one essential of the full-blown theory, the idea of originality.

The second of Carlyle's essays written after he had passed his 'intellectual boyhood,' *State of German Literature*, in the *Edinburgh Review*, October, 1827, takes us far forward. The first, *Jean Paul Friedrich Richter*, like the third, *Life and Writings of Werner*, contributes nothing. The contributions of the essay on the *State of German Literature* are the statements of the Fichtean Divine Idea together with the Literary Man's relation to it and of the Kantean distinction between *Vernunft* and *Verstand*. Carlyle finds the central principle of 'Fichte's notion on this subject' in Schiller's paragraphs on the relation of the Poet or Artist to his age,[8] and then proceeds by digest and quotation to set forth Fichte's idea as follows.

There is a 'Divine Idea' pervading the visible Universe; which visible Universe is indeed but its symbol and sensible manifestation, having in itself no meaning. . . . To the

[8] Already quoted by Carlyle in the *Life of Schiller*, 176-7.

mass of men this Divine Idea lies hidden: yet to discern it, to seize it and live wholly in it, is the condition of all genuine virtue, knowledge, freedom; and the end, therefore, of all spiritual effort in every age. Literary men are the appointed interpreters of this Divine Idea; a perpetual priesthood, we might say, standing forth, generation after generation, as the dispensers and living types of God's everlasting wisdom, to show it in their writings and actions, in such particular form as their own particular times require it in.

The Literary Man is 'a man who *has* studied' and knows. 'A man who, after literary culture, had not arrived at knowledge of the Divine Idea, or did not strive towards it was in strict speech Nothing' or a 'Bungler (Stümper).'[9] This notion and these passages were, it will be remembered, later woven into the lecture on the *Hero as Man of Letters*.[10]

A 'loose and popular' exegesis of 'what to ourselves had long appeared the grand characteristic of Kant's philosophy' follows presently. This is the 'distinction, seldom perhaps expressed so broadly, but uniformly implied, between Understanding and Reason (*Verstand* and *Vernunft*)[11] . . . ; both modes of operation, by which the mind discovers truth,' proceed in manners essentially different in provinces separate and distinguishable.

[9] *Essays*, i, 44, 45, 46.

[10] MacMechan, *Heroes*, 179, 180. On p. 91 is an inexact quotation: 'the Divine Idea of the World, that which lies at the bottom of Appearance,' from his translation on p. 46 of vol. i, *Miscellaneous Essays*.

[11] Cf. *Journal*, 1826, Dec. 7: 'The decisions of reason (*Vernunft*) are superior to those of understanding (*Verstand*). The latter vary in every age (by what law?) while the former last forever, and are the same in all forms of manhood' (Froude, *Thomas Carlyle, A History of the First Forty Years of his Life*, i, 217).

> Reason . . . is of a higher nature than Understanding . . . for Reason discerns Truth itself, the absolutely and primitively *True;* while Understanding discerns only *relations*, and cannot decide without *if*. The proper province of Understanding is all, strictly speaking, *real*, practical and material knowledge, . . . the adaptation of means to ends in the whole business of life.

It works by 'logic and argument.' The province of Reason, 'to be cultivated as the highest faculty in man,' is 'that holier region, where Poetry, and Virtue and Divinity abide, . . . at once the fountain and the termination of all true knowledge.'[12]

Now between these two conceptions there is a remarkable congeniality. If, stimulated by this, Carlyle should chance to equate the Divine Idea with 'the holier region' and its dwellers, the conceptions would coalesce into a new idea which would in part be already the Theory of the Hero and in remainder contain the germ of what had not yet developed. That something of the kind was taking place one may in the light of later writings suppose from Carlyle's acceptance (without responsibility: 'we say . . . in the opinion of a Kantist') of Schelling's dictum that 'the French are of all European nations the most gifted with Understanding, and the most destitute of Reason; that David Hume had no forecast of this latter, and that Shakespeare and Luther dwelt perennially in its purest sphere' (63), and from his characterization of Goethe and Schiller, as 'more or less' men who 'have not only the clear eye, but the loving heart,' who 'have penetrated into the mys-

[12] *Essays*, i, 62, 63.

tery of nature,' and who are 'believers.' The faith they set forth is this:

> As all Nature's thousand changes
> But one changeless God proclaim,
> So in Art's wide kingdom ranges
> One sole meaning still the same:
> This is Truth, eternal Reason,
> Which from beauty takes its dress,
> And, serene through time and season,
> Stands for aye in loveliness. (50)

Of the next five essays, those on *Goethe's Helena* and *German Playwrights* contribute nothing to the history of the idea we are tracing. That on *The Life of Heyne*, also nothing except the negative judgment that 'in point of understanding and spiritual endowment,' Heyne can not be called 'a great, or even, in strict speech, a complete man' (265), and the general proposition (which was afterwards specifically attached to the Hero-Theory) 'that the man is not the product of his circumstances, but that, in a far higher degree, the circumstances are the product of the man' (267). The essay on Goethe presents the first unquestionable application of the idea in the form it appears to have taken in 1827.[13] Goethe is 'by far the most striking instance, in our time, of a writer who is, in strict speech, what Philosophy can call a Man . . . " a clear and Universal *Man* " . . . of that deep endowment and gifted vision.'[14] Of his writings Carlyle says:

In these soft, melodious imaginations of his, there is embodied the Wisdom which is proper to this time; the beauti-

[13] Published in *Foreign Review*, July, 1828. [14] *Essays*, i, 157.

ful, the religious Wisdom, which may still, with something of its old impressiveness, speak to the whole soul; still . . . reveal to us glimpses of the Unseen but not unreal World, that so the Actual and the Ideal may again meet together, and clear Knowledge be again wedded to Religion, in the life and business of men! (158).

The trend of this is clear, its significance obvious and so considerable that no exegesis is necessary to press it out.

It was Burns, however,—fellow Scot, picture to Carlyle of the catastrophe which might lie in his own way—that called out the best application of these high ideas of a Great Man. The *Essay on Burns* is filled with sayings that echo through the output of a dozen years and gain, as it were, new sound in the lectures of 1840. There is the definition of the Poet. For the poet

The Ideal world is not remote from the Actual, but under it and within it; nay he is a poet, precisely because he can discern it there. . . . The poet must have an eye to read these things, and a heart to understand them. . . . He is a *vates*, a seer; a gift of vision has been given him. Has life no meaning for him, which another cannot equally decipher; then he is no poet, and Delphi itself will not make him one (205, 206).

The injunction to every writer is: 'Be true, if you would be believed.' Speak forth with earnestness (202). Such a 'true Poet, a man in whose heart resides some effluence of Wisdom, some tone of the "Eternal Melodies," is the most precious gift that can be bestowed on a generation.' He is a gift bestowed by Nature (199, 200). As for the Protean capacity of the Great Man, the 'Poet . . . Shakespeare . . . in the planning and completing of his tragedies, has shown an Understanding, were it nothing more, which

might have governed states, or indited a *Novum Organum*' (210). Were the dates of our documents unknown, were we indeed working in another and less sourceful age, we should say: These sentences are drawn from the great lectures, which must have preceded them. As it is we are bound to conclude that Carlyle leaned heavily on the essay on *Burns* when he 'splashed his paragraphs down on paper' in preparation for the ordeal of the lecture-room. It is, also, pretty clear how far the idea of a Great Man has developed. In measuring Burns, we must finally add, Carlyle fell upon several terms henceforth inseparable from the idea. 'The excellence of Burns is . . . his *Sincerity*, his indisputable air of truth' (202), his melody is 'his own, and genuine' (202), and he is possessed of 'quick, sure insight into men and things' (210). Not yet with their final significance upon them, but the words are there: *sincerity*, *genuine*, *insight*.

But the essay serves us one more turn in supplying a clue to the relation of the theory of biography with that of conduct which is in fact the Theory of the Hero. 'A model of perfection in Biography' depends upon the author's ability to answer two questions: 'How did coexisting circumstances modify him from without; how did he modify these from within?' In short, the subject of biography forms to the writer a part of the world. With regard to that 'world and man's life' what insight to truth, what understanding and gift for interpreting semblances has the writer? If he have enough, then he may expound for us the conduct of his subject in relation to society's effect upon him and his effect upon society (197).

When in 1829 Carlyle came to deal with Voltaire, his idea of the Great Man got itself practically delimited by definition of a merely great man. We have already glanced at Schelling's dictum that 'the French are of all European nations the most gifted with Understanding, and the most destitute of Reason.' The essay on Voltaire illustrates it. Voltaire's great talent is *adroitness*,[15] his great deficiency is 'entire want of Earnestness' (13). He is not at all the Poet and Philosopher, but a mere Man of the World, a great *Persifleur* (22, 23).

> Reverence, the highest feeling that man's nature is capable of . . . he seems not to understand. . . . The glory of knowing and believing is all but a stranger to him. . . . Accordingly he sees but a little way into Nature; the mighty All . . . has never even for moments been revealed to him. . . . 'The Divine Idea, that which lies at the bottom of Appearance' was never more invisible to any man (14).

Much of the spiritual shortcoming might be due to natural defect; much is also due to the age. It is an age of 'merely argumentative Logic' (16); 'No Duc de Richelieu, no Prince Conti, no Frederick the Great' would have listened to 'deep thoughts' (21). To require of Voltaire that he preach 'a far deeper truth' than the age would hear would be to 'require what he has not to give' (17). 'Truth . . . remains for the most part hidden from him; we may say forever hidden, if we take the highest, and only philosophical species of Truth' (38).

Here, in the negative application of the measure of true Greatness, we have clear, unquestionable progress. The essay on Voltaire also offers incidental evidence that Car-

[15] *Essays*, ii, 9, 10, 11.

lyle was struggling with the problem of mass-following, of false worship and its possibilities. 'The million,' we read, 'even the wiser part of them, are apt to lose their discretion, when "tumultuously assembled"; for a small object, near at hand, may subtend a large angle' (9). A reverse phase of the problem which here presents itself formed later one of Carlyle's own difficulties in judging his contemporaries. Meanwhile, he had but this general proposition to offer: 'The faculty of love, of admiration, is to be regarded as the sign and the measure of high souls: unwisely directed it leads to many evils; but without it there cannot be any good' (13). At first as at last it was a problem for which his thought found no solution.

Carlyle's 'faculty of love, of admiration' immediately directed itself—unwisely, as it proved—to Novalis. In his zeal to 'love and venerate' all 'men of depth,' 'how perverse so ever they might seem to us at first' (59), he acclaimed Novalis largely because he was one who did 'not recognize the "syllogistic method" as the chief organ for investigating truth.' And he admitted his debt to this deep man ('I thank him for somewhat').[16] But for us the interest lies in an excellent statement of the Transcendental doctrine. Here occur several sentences which advance the elements of the Hero-Theory toward the phraseology of 1840 and the expository passages discussed in the preceding chapter. The presentation is more argumentative than any earlier one.[17]

If it be, as Kant maintains, that the logical mechanism of the mind is arbitrary, so to speak, and might have been

[16] Froude, *History of First Forty Years*, ii, 44. [17] *Essays*, ii, 75 ff.

made different, it will follow, that all inductive conclusions, all conclusions of the Understanding, have only a relative truth, are true only for *us*, and *if* some other thing be true.

In the late summer and autumn of 1830 Carlyle wrote the long paper 'entitled *Thoughts on Clothes*.' This '*schrift*' was not accepted by Fraser and in that early form has passed out of existence.[18] The essays he wrote immediately preceding this first draft of *Sartor* reveal that the question of Great Men was not put out of Carlyle's thought.[19] The essay on *Richter Again* quotes for the first time the lines from *The Tempest* which were to be so significantly woven into *The Hero as Poet*. And the final judgment on Richter shows that at length the Fichtean Divine Idea and *Gelehrter* have coalesced with the Kantean distinction. Out of the new conception has risen the element of leadership, for ordinary men are not aware of the Divine Idea by their own processes of knowing. In view of the apparent insistence of this idea, we might reasonably suppose that it appeared in those *Thoughts on Clothes*.

If we accept Professor MacMechan's suggestion that Book I of *Sartor Resartus* is 'that very "Thoughts," slightly altered,'[20] it will be possible to proceed in more thorough fashion. In Book I of *Sartor*, there is of course much emphasis given the Transcendental conception of the Universe (46-49). The Pure Reason as the means of perceiving the Eternal through the Time-Vesture is set forth in Chapter x. Teufelsdröckh has something of the insight of

[18] MacMechan, *Sartor Resartus*, xvii, xviii.
[19] *Essays, Signs of the Times*, ii, 100, 112; *Richter*, ii, 163, 167.
[20] MacMechan, *Sartor*, xviii.

a Philosopher (13-24). The genuine contributions to the theory we are tracing are, however, the following: '*Man is a Spirit*, and bound by invisible bonds to *All Men*' (53) and 'Wonder is the basis of Worship: the reign of wonder is perennial, indestructible in Man' (60). The ideas contained in these sentences are not indeed linked with that of the Great Man. In fact, few of Carlyle's early writings show less consciousness of the problem of genius than this. In Book III of *Sartor* the case is different; but Book III is the work of the first half of 1831.[21] Meanwhile, other essays were being written, and in these we must look for hints of that statement of the Hero-Theory which is one of the features of the last book of *Sartor*.

The *Thoughts on History* (Fraser, November, 1830) first informed the world that 'History is the essence of innumerable Biographies,' though without any hint of a Great Man monopoly.[22] It also first phrased the distinction between a Seer and a mere Onlooker (171). This distinction it in a sense specialized for the writer of history: the Artist, who informs and ennobles 'the humblest department with an Idea of the Whole' and habitually knows that 'only in the Whole is the Partial to be truly discerned'; the Artisan, who labors 'mechanically in a department, without eye for the Whole, not feeling that there is a Whole' (173). The core of the doctrine of *Heroes* must be pretty definitely present in the mind that makes such distinctions. If there be any doubt, let it be dissolved by citation of the following sentences published two months later. The passage

[21] MacMechan, *Sartor*, xviii. [22] *Essays*, ii, 170.

would strike the reader as rhetorical, were he not clearly aware of the development that goes forward.

> If every great man, Napoleon himself, is ultimately a poet, an idealist, with more or less completeness of utterance, which of all our great men, in these modern ages, had such an endowment as Luther? He it was, emphatically, who stood based on the Spiritual World of man, and only By the footing and miraculous power he had obtained there, could work such changes in the Material World. As a participant and dispenser of divine influences, he shows himself among human affairs; a true connecting medium and visible Messenger between Heaven and Earth; a man, therefore, not only permitted to enter the sphere of Poetry, but to dwell in the purest center thereof: perhaps the most inspired of all Teachers since the first Apostles of his faith; and thus not a Poet only, but a Prophet and god-ordained Priest, which is the highest form of that dignity, and of all dignity (178).

There follows a comment on use of words and of actions by such a messenger. 'With words he had not learned to make pure music; it was by deeds of love or heroic valour that he spoke freely' (178-9). Carlyle does not here expound his idea; he does not define his elements. But he moves within the idea and makes the elements his idiom.

Fraser would not have the *Thoughts on Clothes;* but he did publish *Peter Nimmo, A Rhapsody,* which seems to me a grim bit of satire on the document that could find no market. It was not reprinted in the *Miscellanies.* The Introduction (signed O. Y.) holds its own merriment—a rattling exaggeration of Carlyle's tricks of style—and some matter for our serious notice.

Singular men are at all times worthy of being described and sung; nay, strictly considered, there is nothing else worthy. . . . To the idle, indeed, they are objects of idle wonder, and speculation almost childish; but to the thinking, to him that has the seeing eye, and not merely a gazing one, these Hieroglyphs are a true Sacred Writing; the Napoleon, the Nimmo, are mystic windows through which we glance deeper into the hidden ways of Nature, and discern under a clearer figure the workings of that inscrutable Spirit of the Time, and Spirit of Time itself, who is by some thought to be the Devil.

'The seeing eye,' 'mystic windows'—the terminology of the Theory is gradually accumulating itself.

It seems likely that *Peter Nimmo* was written in the interval before work began again on *Sartor*. In that interval and as the philosophy of Clothes was put into final form, Carlyle wrote essays on *Schiller*, *The Nibelungen Lied*, *German Literature of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries*, and a review of *Taylor's Historic Survey of German Poetry*. The first of these marks a point of measurement in the development. More than seven years had elapsed since a judgment of Schiller had tested Carlyle's theory of biography and his theory of conduct. In 1831 the judgment was passed in terms of a formula. Whoever has not, we read, seen the greatness of Great Men and 'with his whole heart passionately loved and reverenced' it, is 'forever doomed to be little' (183). A Poet is the genuine interpreter of the Invisible (187), and Schiller, 'as a Poet and Thinker,' attains 'to a perennial Truth' (219). But he differs from the greatest poets, because his glances seldom see Infinitude behind the trivial, but only the august (207). Nevertheless,

he is a Seer, and all reverent men will regard him as such, for 'that theory of "no man being a hero to his valet" . . . essentially holds good only for such heroes as are false, or else of such valets as are too genuine' (184). The phrase 'a Poet and Thinker'—with one article—may be glossed by the following phrase from *Taylor's Survey of German Literature:* 'The true Poet, who is but the inspired Thinker' (336).

The distance Carlyle has now gone in this whole matter we may sum up under the seal of an inconspicuous parenthesis in the essay on the *Nibelungen Lied*. He is speaking of *Das Heldenbuch*, which he translates *Hero-Book*. Immediately after *Hero-Book* comes the parenthesis '(the only one we yet have, though there is talk of a better).' Inconspicuous but most significant. The date is the first half of 1831. Things have fallen to their nadir at Craigenputtoch. Even Larry the clever horse is dead from overwork at the plow and on the road—double duty. Carlyle is full of projects. August 4, when he was to leave for London 'at two in the morning,' is an indifferent day some months off. There is no sure prospect that the enlarged manuscript will sell. Among the projects is a 'book of the great German lion,'[23] a life of Luther that should be a *Hero-Book*.

What manner of thing a *Hero-Book* would at that date have been one may guess. For in *Sartor*, which Carlyle put in his pocket before he drove off 'at two in the morning' with his brother Alick, the word Hero is attached to the

[23] Froude, *First Forty Years*, ii, 57.

idea of Reverence for Great Men—and the phrase Hero-worship evolves. The skillful artistry which wrought the strange book which is *Sartor Resartus* is nowhere to be better studied than in the presentation of this matter. We have already seen that Book I contained certain filaments, not yet organically woven into the theory. Book II carries these threads on through the complex figure of the larger design. Obedience (89), the god-ordained Priesthood of Teachers (96), the Miracle of Thought (108), are to us old ideas in new terms. That 'Great Men are the inspired (speaking and acting) Texts of that divine BOOK OF REVELATIONS, whereof a Chapter is completed from epoch to epoch' (161), that Teufelsdröckh 'is led and compelled' 'to look through the Shows of things into Things themselves,' are conceptions so familiar to us from the effect of the 1840 lectures that we must be on our guard not to miss the significance of 'is led and compelled.' There appears to be an inner, ineluctable compulsion for the Great Man. It is in this Book III that the threads are gathered up. Here again the skillful workmanship—an almost dramatic progress—strikes one. In the chapter on *Symbols* is the preparation; in—

> all true works of Art . . . wilt thou discern Eternity looking through Time; the Godlike rendered visible. . . . But nobler than all in this kind are the Lives of heroic god-inspired Men; for what other Work of Art is so divine? . . . Highest of all Symbols are those wherein the Artist and Poet has risen into Prophet, and all men can recognize a present God, and worship the same (203).

Proceeding then by, as it were, casual strokes, Carlyle

comes to the climax which is structurally also the 'knitting-up' of the great chapter entitled *Organic Filaments*.

> Here, looking round, as was our hest, for 'organic filaments,' we ask, may not this, touching 'Hero-worship' be of the number? . . . True is it that, in these days, man can do almost all things, only not obey. True likewise that whoso cannot obey cannot be free, still less bear rule; he that is the inferior of nothing, can be the superior of nothing, the equal of nothing. Nevertheless, believe not that man has lost his faculty of Reverence; that if it slumber in him, it has gone dead. Painful for man is that same rebellious Independence, when it has become inevitable; only in loving companionship with his fellows does he feel safe; only in reverently bowing down before the Higher does he feel himself exalted.
>
> Or what if the character of our so troublous Era lay even in this: that man had forever cast away Fear, which is the lower; but not yet risen into perennial Reverence, which is the higher and the highest.
>
> Meanwhile, observe with joy, so cunningly has Nature ordered it, that whatsoever man ought to obey he cannot but obey. Before no faintest revelation of the Godlike did he ever stand irreverent; least of all, when the Godlike showed itself revealed in his fellow-man. Thus is there a true religious Loyalty forever rooted in his heart; nay, in all ages, even in ours, it manifests itself as a more or less orthodox *Hero-worship*. In which fact, that Hero-worship exists, has existed, and will forever exist, universally among Mankind, mayest thou discern the corner-stone of living rock, whereon all Polities for the remotest time may stand secure. . . .
>
> Know that there is in man a quite indestructible Reverence for whatsoever holds of Heaven (227-229).

The fulness of this statement is noteworthy, though so important an element as the mutability of the essential

Hero-stuff at which Carlyle had already hinted has no place.

While *Sartor* came and went among the publishers, Carlyle put an adaption of its thought into *Characteristics*. 'It,' he wrote to his brother John in reference to the essay, 'is Teufeldröckhish, and preaches from this text: The healthy know not of their health, but only the sick.'[24] The idea of the Great Man is incidentally advanced to a new station: unconsciousness of his sincerity or of his ability is added to his qualities. The process is this. 'The healthy Understanding, we should say, is not the Logical, argumentative, but the Intuitive; for the end of Understanding is not to prove and find reasons, but to know and believe.'[25] The use of *Understanding* is here a bit confusing, but Carlyle goes on to explain that he refers to the processes of 'the man of logic' as against 'the man of insight' (5). The man of insight is unconscious of his power, 'knows not' what he has done, or how, whereas the debater and the demonstrator 'knows what he has done and how he did it' (4). Consequently, when he reverts to his thesis, we are told that the 'man of insight,' of *Vernunft*, 'the Poet, or Priest, or by whatever title the inspired thinker may be named, is the sign of vigour and well-being; so likewise is the Logician, or uninspired thinker, the sign of disease, probably of decrepitude and decay' (12).

More than one of those who read *Sartor* in 1831 told Carlyle that the public taste for such caviar must be cultivated. *Characteristics* is the beginning of a canny effort

[24] Froude, *First Forty Years*, ii, 142. [25] *Essays*, iii, 4.

in that direction. One of the ideas, indeed an intertwining of several of the ideas to which that sad public had to be accustomed was that of Hero-worship, 'so quaint, so mystical.'[26] Accordingly, we find in every piece of work that came from Carlyle's pen, in which the slightest opportunity arose, a statement, a reference, or an application of the theory of the Great Man. It is indubitable that Carlyle was advertising his rejected labor. But that is not the whole of the matter. The question of Great Men and their worship gets an undue emphasis, from which it is equally indubitable that Carlyle was fond of his idea, and even fascinated by it. Numerous minute indications are to the same point. An array of them, however, would be tiresome, useless in this place since the point is not moot, and would do no justice to the case since they depend upon contextual values for which restatement gives one no leverage. If we remind ourselves further that with Carlyle repetition of an idea led to accumulation by the process of accretion, we shall be ready to follow the gestation of the Hero-Theory through its last stages.

Of the eight essays which precede Carlyle's first dip into the French Revolution, two—*Corn Law Rhymes* and *On History Again*—supply nothing toward our end. In each of the others we find something; in some much. The brief note accompanying *Goethe's Portrait* in the Fraser Series asserts of Goethe that 'acts of parliament will be passed in virtue of him:—this man, if we will consider of it, is appointed to be ruler of the world.'[27] An idea which is

[26] MacMechan, *Sartor*, 227. [27] *Essays*, iii, 35.

amplified in the *Essay on Johnson*. 'This man was to become a Teacher of grown gentlemen, in the most surprising way; a Man of Letters, and Ruler of the British nation for some time,—not of their bodies merely but of their minds, not *over* them but *in* them' (75).

In *Biography* appeared first the 'one grand, invaluable secret,' to which we have already referred: '*To have an open loving heart, and what follows from the possession of such!*' And *What follows* is defined, vaguely, as 'the beginning of all knowledge' (46). This 'A loving heart is the beginning of all knowledge' is self-quotation of a sort from the exposition of Fichte's Divine Idea, approximately equivalent to Knowledge. Of the practice of which this essay states the theory, Carlyle gave instance in his review of Croker's edition of Boswell's *Life of Johnson*. The two essays were worked out synchronously and must not be divorced in the treatment of this phase. For in this combination we at last see fully how a literary theory and a law of conduct can have identity. Boswell is the lesser of Carlyle's objects, but he is the object in whom Carlyle discerns the 'seeing eye' which all possess if they will use it. It is the sympathetic heart creating the sincere head. 'The heart sees farther than the head' means that (57, 60). The knowledge that Johnson was a hero worthy of worship would have made Boswell a true man, even had he not had 'an utterance to render it forth' (60). In short, the basis of a true man is also the basis of a good biographer. Henceforth we need not glance at this controvertability of the theory of biography.

What Carlyle has to say of Johnson as a Great Man is also contributive. The additions to the idea of the Great Man are not noteworthy, but the turning upon Johnson of light from each facet gives a remarkable fulness to the impression left in the reader's mind. There is, to begin with, a phrasing of the human situation. Men must always have 'their Chief, their Guide!' (68).

> Amid the dull millions . . . are scattered here and there superior natures, whose eye is not destitute of free vision, nor their heart of free volition. . . . These are properly our Men, our Great Men; the guides of the dull host,—which follows them as by an irrevocable decree. They are the chosen of the world: they had this rare faculty not only of 'supposing' and 'inclining to think,' but of *knowing* and *believing;* . . . they lived not by Hearsay, but by clear vision, . . . they saw into the Things themselves. . . . Thus was there a *Reality* in their existence.
>
> Of such chosen men was Samuel Johnson. . . . By nature he was gifted for the noblest of earthly tasks, that of Priesthood, and Guidance of mankind; by destiny, moreover, he was appointed to this task.[28]

This man of Letters who was called to a speculative life might have shone even more as a Statesman, Ruler, Lawgiver, as Doer of the Work than as Speaker of the Word—the mutability of the Hero-faculty (71). But he was, as a fact, 'the Prophet of the English' (93); and our question is, how did he effect his prophecy? Here Carlyle makes an analysis which serves greatly in the effort to simplify his doctrine of *Heroes and Hero-Worship*. Johnson spoke forth 'the Truth that was in him' and spoke it 'truly, that is, in the

[28] *Essays*, iii, 69, 90.

clearest and fittest utterance the Heavens had enabled him to give it' (77). This is the Great Man, who knows Truth first, and then speaks it truly, or who knows Truth and expresses it in Action, 'as what we have named Honesty of action' (96, 97). Other men may be honest in action, but only a great man has a true ground for action. Valor, Courage stands in reciprocal relation to Truthfulness and Honesty, each sustaining the sustainer (94, 96). Such is Carlyle's own practical theory of the Great Man in 1832, the year that saw the death of Goethe, of Scott, and of James Carlyle, the Annandale peasant of whom the son thought that in intellectual endowment he was no less, at the least, than Robert Burns.[29] To his essays upon the first of these we must now turn.

The Death of Goethe naturally has much to repeat of the whole Great Man idea. 'The true Sovereign is the wise man' (108). Goethe 'we may say, became morally great, by being in his own age, what in some other ages might have been, a genuine man'—first appearance of this aspect, later so much stressed: that in an age of Unbelief only a *very* great Insight can get through the distracted Semblance into the Reality. 'As his primary faculty, the foundation of all others, was Intellect, depth and force of Vision'(111). A crispness is noticeable here that continues to mark all reference to the subject. In another figure the historian of the idea finds himself present at the moment when the matter which was in solution, giving only comparatively amorphous indications of itself, has crystallized out of the sol-

[29] *Reminiscences*, Norton, 5, 13.

vent. As Carlyle saw the thing fully, he moved on from the tentative 'one knows not what, or how little, may lie under it'[30] to the hearty recommendation of the continental humorist's *Greatness of Great Men;* 'which topic we agree with him in reckoning one of the most pregnant.'[31] 'Deep and venerable . . . is this love of men for great men, this their exclusive admiration of great men' (119). I quote these last passages from that long introduction to *Goethe's Works*, almost one-fourth of the document, which quotes from and comments upon *Die Kleider; ihr Werden und Wirken.* Mere advertising of an unpublished book, it is obvious, would not account for the extent or the enthusiasm of this introduction. But long as it is, there runs through it the same assured touch, the same crystalline phrasing. ' "Of a truth, men are mystically united; a mystic bond of brotherhood makes all men one" ' (115). ' "I tell thee Hero-worship still continues; it is the only creed which never and nowhere grows or can grow obsolete. For always and everywhere this remains a true saying: Il y a dans le coeur humain un fibre religieux" ' (116). 'Thus is the Great Man of an age, beyond comparison, the most important phenomenon therein. . . . Ever must we wait on the bounty of Time, and see what leader shall be born for us, and whither he will lead' (120).

With the idea of the Great Man blazing in Carlyle's mind, with the assurance of Insight in himself and the fortunate testing of his beliefs in the presence of two such great losses as that of his father (to whom *Heroes* was to

[30] *Sartor Resartus*, 227. [31] *Essays*, iii, 115.

be dedicated) and that of Goethe, 1832 naturally marks a stage. 'I get . . . no influences of moment,' Carlyle wrote to Emerson in August, 1834. The Theory of the Great Man was already complete in 1832. The steps by which it reached that completeness, are, I hope, clear from this review. It is perhaps sufficient to point out that nothing noteworthy was added to it in matter or statement till the necessities of the fourth course of lectures brought his mind to brood afresh on the subject, and turn it out as the Theory of the Hero. Such essays as were written in the eight intervening years, *The French Revolution*, and *Chartism* (written in 1839, though published in 1840), fall for consideration into the list of writings not so much revealing the idea of Great Man as showing on the face of the work or in the very conception of the task the powerful influence of this idea. To that problem I shall turn after an interval. The next project is to discover with as much thoroughness as possible the sources of the Hero-Theory, for these sources throw further light on the growth of the idea and the processes of the creator's mind.

CHAPTER IV

SOURCES OF THE THEORY OF THE HERO I.

In tracing to its origins an idea of the kind represented by the theory of the Hero, it is necessary to distinguish three kinds of sources. There are, first, concrete borrowings, so marked in thought and especially in terminology as to permit the use of what is technically known as the method of parallel passages. The indebtedness in such cases may have been acknowledged by the debtor, with reference to the chapter and verse. And then the task is very simple. But whether there be acknowledgment or not, the proof of the parallel passages may not be questioned, even when autobiographical data stand against it. For autobiographical writing is subdued to the mood and temper of the moment in which the author takes his pen in hand, and is not always to be relied upon. The word of the Coleridge of Highgate is not to be taken concerning the young radical of the Bristol addresses. Carlyle's disclaimer of debt to Wordsworth will not be allowed by one who calls the evidence into court. The parallel passage is circumstantial evidence of the best sort.

A different case arises when at the time of borrowing the indebtedness was doubtless realized, but the suitability of the thought has lost it its identity. The borrower, so thoroughly does his mind absorb the thought, no longer regards it as foreign matter. By strangely complex processes of osmosis and entanglement and domiciling, the

stranger comes to be at home. Then the source hunter can merely guess. This indebtedness we usually designate loosely, and inversely, by the word influence. The term is exact only if we mean it to be taken etymologically.

The third type of source is a vaguer thing. It cannot be traced by arraying parallels of phrase and idea. It differs from the second type in that the author never, for a moment even, thought of his acquisition as a borrowing. I mean to indicate that body of material which glides quietly into a conception. It is to this insensible accumulation that we refer when we say that a writer expresses ideas which are in the air. He may do his part as one of the hundred million in making them thus current; as a writer he does what is given to few—he crystallizes them out of the great contemporary float of solution. The common thought of thinkers and speakers everywhere becomes his source.

To undertake to trace the sources of a theory such as this of Carlyle's is under any circumstances to project what cannot be exhaustively accomplished. When the author was a reader of the widest and most curious range and of prodigious memory, the undertaking will meet with even more partial success. No young man can have read even what the clues afforded by biographical material show that Carlyle had read before 1840. Even the scholarship of Professor MacMechan, reviewed and supported by the learning of his general editor, must frequently confess failure in its search.[1] For the facts were garnered into Carlyle's memory from remotest corners, many of which

[1] See MacMechan, *Heroes*, notes, *passim*.

are now known only to the dust. And what is true of the facts is true of the ideas. The sources were by no means so simple—and single— as critics and scholars have implied. Indeed, they are vastly diverse. And, although I do not dream that I have them all in my net, I desire here to establish this diversity and to fix the main sources of each element fused into the Hero-Theory.

THE SOURCES PREVIOUSLY NOTED

Among the investigators before me in the field, Professor Cestre easily disposes of the questions of sources: the Hero comes from Shelley's rebel.[2] Professor Babbitt in a gratuitous parenthesis derives the Hero from the original genius of the eighteenth century. Professors Perry and MacMechan found the 'main' or 'germinal' idea in Hume. Professor Vaughan in a consideration of Carlyle's debt to his German Masters, without implying that he is telling the whole story, gives to Fichte mastery of the Hero idea. In some of these derivations there is truth, I find; in none the whole or even a reasonable completeness of the truth; and in one at least no truth.

In *Rousseau and Romanticism* Professor Babbitt in his chapter on Romantic Melancholy has the following sentence. 'Carlyle, whose "hero" derives like the superman from the original genius of the eighteenth century, makes the following entry in his diary: "My isolation, my feeling of loneliness, unlimitedness (much meant by this) what tongue shall say? Alone, alone" ' (327). To the student of

[2] In a lecture at Harvard by Charles Cestre, Exchange Professor from France in 1917-18.

Carlyle the whole sentence is a challenge; but I must content myself with discussing the obiter dictum. I shall first attempt to dispose of the 'superman'; indeed, to avoid repetition I have left definition and elimination of the ideas that move under that caption to be considered at this point. There are, it seems to me, two supermen: the superman who was abroad in the so-called Romantic Era and the Übermensch for whom specifically Nietzsche is responsible. The latter can not in the time-order of things have anything to do with Carlyle's Hero, except as result. Napoleon, Professor Babbitt says of the earlier conception, is 'the very type of the superman' (327). Napoleon is not, however, the very type of the Hero. Carlyle's mature judgment is essentially that he *was* a Hero while he remained based upon Reality;[3] after that he became a Quack, a Pretender to Hero-ship. On another page in *Rousseau and Romanticism* we read that 'Stendhal . . . glorifies the lust for power' (317) and thereby, if the logic of sentence structure means anything, 'He did as much as anyone in his time to promote the ideal of the superman.' 'Lust for power' as such, is (it can be elaborately proved) not a quality of the Hero. It is quite clear that the Hero and the Superman are two things, and moreover that if they indeed derive from the 'original genius' they are collateral not lineal relatives.

Fortunately, the chapter we are discussing offers a summary of the psychology of the original genius. To the original genius 'it was a tame and uninteresting thing to be simply

[3] MacMechan, *Heroes*, 277 ff.

human' and 'disdaining to seem to others a being of the same clay as themselves,' he 'wished to be in their eyes either an angel or a demon—above all a demon' (317). These original geniuses were not like 'the great poets of the past' who have Professor Babbitt's approval because these 'were less taken up with uttering of their own uniqueness; they were, without ceasing to be themselves, servants of the general sense' (320). Now it seems to me that, if the analysis of the Hero-Theory presented documentarily in Chapter iii has even an approximate truth, Carlyle's Hero derives less from the original genius and more from the 'great poets of the past.' Certainly upon no point is Carlyle more insistent than upon the 'unconsciousness' of the Hero. The Hero does not know he is unique in most cases, *i.e.* he is 'healthy,' and when he does know it he has other things to do besides utter his uniqueness. However the case may be with Carlyle himself (and to that we shall give some attention in the final chapter), with his Hero it is unquestionably not as it was with the original genius. Carlyle's use of the word *original* is antipodal to the use in this term. With him to be original is to be part of the great centrality of the universe. Should further data be necessary to dispose of this 'source' than such implied reference to Chapter iii as I have made in the preceding sentences, Professor Babbitt's introduction presents them.

The problem of the One and the Many struck the 'original genius'—if it struck him at all—as no problem. He fell, I think it may be said, 'into a metaphysic of the

Many.'[4] As I understand the tendency, it is essentially a phase of such a metaphysic. Professor Babbitt heaps contempt upon the phase because he thinks the metaphysic wrong. He himself treats the problem of the One and the Many—of the real and the vanishing—positively and critically in a fashion that is, he says, 'nearer to Buddha than to Plato' (XX). 'Perhaps the most positive and critical account of man in modern literature is that of Shakespeare:

> We are such stuff,
> As dreams are made on, and our little life
> Is rounded with a sleep' (XIV).

Now Carlyle's own solution of the problem was such that he could focus his statement of it in the chapter entitled 'Natural Supernaturalism' in *Sartor Resartus* in precisely these most positive and critical lines. And then in that brilliant light, he asked whether the lines opening

> And like the baseless fabric of this vision

'begin to have some meaning for us?' It is perhaps unnecessary to remind ourselves how the former passage was used in *Heroes and Hero Worship*, of 1840.

The problem of conduct follows upon the solution of that of the One and the Many. Professor Babbitt himself puts the new problem, and solves it thus:

Man is cut off from immediate contact with anything abiding and therefore worthy to be called real, and condemned to live in an element of fiction or illusion, but he may, I have tried to show, lay hold with the aid of the imagination on the element of oneness that is inextricably

[4] *Rousseau and Romanticism*, xiii.

blended with the manifoldness and change and to just that extent may build up a sound model for imitation. One tends to be an individualist with true standards, to put the matter somewhat differently, only in so far as one understands the relation between appearance and reality' (xv).

This solution is not identical with Carlyle's solution as we have seen it, but neither is it very different. It was the whole object of Carlyle's life to understand and to make clear the relation between the unreal, the appearance of things and the real, the original, the central truth.

Professor Cestre's attribution and the German nexus fixed by Professor Vaughan may be given due attention later. But concerning the sentence in Hume's 'discussion of polytheism' in which Professor MacMechan sees the 'main idea' of 'the theory of *Heroes*' (XXXI) and Professor Perry 'the germinal idea of the six lectures,'[5] a question must now be raised. The sentence reads as follows: 'The same principles naturally deify mortals superior in power, courage, or understanding, and produce hero-worship.' The 'sentence' is in fact only the first clause of a sentence in the paragraph before the last of *Section V—Various Forms of Polytheism: Allegory, Hero-Worship*— of an account called *'the Natural History of Religion.'*[6] There cannot be the slightest doubt that Carlyle knew the work, and the title of the section must have stuck in his memory. We have here a possible source of the phrase Hero-Worship, though as we shall see there are other

[5] Bliss Perry, *Carlyle; How to Know Him*, 171.
[6] *Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary*, by David Hume, ii, 328.

possibilities. But whether we have here the source of the idea either of the six lectures or of the theory of *Heroes* is a question. In the first place we shall have to remind ourselves that Carlyle was not looking for a source; in other words he read the clause in the context. When we read it in this way, what is its meaning? Hume is discussing in *Section V* the creation of deities, mythology and fable and allegory among 'vulgar polytheists,' of which the cause is man's effort to reconcile his belief in an invisible, intelligent power in nature with his strong propensity to rest his attention on sensible, visible objects. Led by this effort to reconcile opposite inclinations, he deifies conspicuous productions of nature and makes a simple, not always consistent (or to us explicable) allegory and mythology (325-6). The deities so achieved are

> so little superior to human creatures, that, where men are affected with strong sentiments of veneration or gratitude for any hero or public benefactor, nothing can be more natural than to convert him into a god. . . . Poets, allegorists, and priests . . . painters too and sculptors . . . successively improved upon the wonder and astonishment of the ignorant multitude [and furnished] men with sensible representations of their divinities. . . . It was probably for want of these arts in rude and barbarous ages, that men deified plants, animals, and even brute, unorganized matter; and rather than be without a sensible object of worship affixed divinity to such ungainly forms (327).

These then are the general principles of polytheism, founded in human nature, and little or nothing dependent on caprice and accident. As the *causes*, which bestow happiness or misery, are, in general, very little known and very uncertain, our anxious concern endeavors to attain

a determinate idea of them; and finds no better expedient than to represent them as intelligent voluntary agents, like ourselves; only somewhat superior in power and wisdom. The limited influence of these agents, and their proximity to human weakness, introduce the various distribution and division of their authority; and thereby give rise to the allegory (327-8).

Then follows the sentence: 'The same principles naturally deify mortals, superior in power, courage, or understanding, and produce hero-worship; together with fabulous history and mythological tradition, in all its wild and unaccountable forms' (328). To determine the meaning of the excerpted clause we must answer two questions. First, is 'the same principles' a loose phrase or has it reference to some elaboration in the context? Clearly it refers back to 'the general principles of polytheism' which are defined in the second preceding sentence, beginning 'As the *causes*.' Second, does the clause which follows the semi-colon in any wise affect the sense of the first clause? Clearly, again, it does. For the idea is not that the same principles deify men *whether* superior in power *or* in courage *or* in understanding, but that the same principles which deify men, producing hero-worship thereby, also produce 'fabulous history and mythological tradition, in all its wild and unaccountable forms.' To a final question, whether this sentence so read can be the main idea of the theory of *Heroes* or the germinal idea, I shall for my part have to answer: Impossible. The most that can be said is that Hume may have contributed the word Hero-Worship. Even on that point we must seek further evidence.

THE WORD AND THE IDEA IN ENGLAND BEFORE CARLYLE

To meek young men in libraries, tracing the history of the word hero-worship should doubtless be a welcome task. Here I seek only the places in which Carlyle may have found the word, and desire to establish the general familiarity of his audience with the idea which stood behind it. For he continually assumes that his audience is familiar with an older form of hero-worship than this which he preaches.

There are, distinctly, two connotations in the word *hero*. Dr. Johnson had one in mind when on April 7, 1779 at Sir Joshua's he settled one more point. 'He who aspires to be a hero,' he said (smiling) must 'drink brandy.' The other came down from the ancient practice of making demigods of heroes and worshipping them. This conception was generally known in the latter half of the eighteenth century. Brewster's *Edinburgh Encyclopedia* had no information on the subject. But *Chambers Encyclopedia* says, 'Heroes were, in the Homeric period . . . half human and half divine, and were honoured, after their death, with a kind of adoration or inferior worship.' The *Encyclopedia Brittanica:* 'Hero, in Pagan mythology, a great and illustrious person, of a mortal nature, though supposed by the populace to partake of immortality, and after his death to be placed among the gods.'[7] *Rees's Cyclopedia:* 'Hero, in the *ancient Theology*, and *mythology*, a great and illustrious person, of mortal nature, though by the popu-

[7] Second edition, 1780.

lace supposed to partake of immortality, and after his death, placed by them among the number of the Gods . . . The Greeks . . . established a kind of worship in honour of the manes both of their heroes and heroines.' Encyclopedias reflected an interest which expressed itself also in books. Bishop Warburton, writing between 1738 and 1741, set going a series of treatises upon the Mysteries. In Section IV of *The Divine Legation of Moses Demonstrated* he undertook

an examination of two celebrated pieces of Antiquity, the famous *Sixth Book of Virgil's Aeneid*, and the *Metamorphosis of Apuleius:* The first of which will shew us of what use the *Mysteries* were esteemed to Society; and the second of what support to *religion*. . . . Aeneis' adventure to the Shades [gives us] *the shows and representations of the Mysteries*.[8]

Warburton was endeavoring to show that the Unity of the Godhead was taught in the Mysteries. To do this he had to say much of heroes, demigods, and gods, and their worship—even to brush these aside. His work is referred to again and again in other discussions of the subject: by the learned Abbe Barthélemy in 1790,[9] by Ouvaroff,[10] and by Thomas Taylor.[11] The same subject, with its hero-vocabulary, was dealt with in *Recherches sur les mystères du paganisme* (Paris, 1784) by De Saint-Croix, in *Characteristick der alten Mysterien für Gelehrte und Ungelehrte, Freymäurer und Fremde aus den Original-Schriftstellern*

[8] Bishop Warburton, *Works*, ii, 78.

[9] *Voyage d'Anacharsis*, v, 542: 'en otant à Warburton ce moyen si victorieux, je ne pretends pas attaquer son opinion sur le secret des mystères. qui me paroît fort vraisemblable.'

[10] M. Sergi Ouvaroff, *Essay on the Mysteries of Eleusis*, 46.

(1787), and in Taylor's *Iamblichus on the Mysteries* (1821). The nature of the vocabulary used in setting forth the ancient practice may be illustrated by the following sentence: 'Herodotus (in Euterpe) says of the Greeks, "That they worshipped Hercules two ways, one as an immortal deity, and so they sacrificed to him; and another as Hero, and so they celebrated his memory." '[12] The spread of the conception (in a more or less impure form, of course) may be measured by the alarm of a deistic correspondent of *The Monthly Magazine* in 1796.[13] He mistakes the point of view in certain passages in Bacon, Milton, Hobbes, and Hume (which he very inaccurately quotes), and cries: 'Can it then be really true that hero-worship is a rational form of idolatry . . . ?' The letter is a contribution *Concerning Some Apologists of Hero-Worship*. The implications of this document are unmistakable. And, for one, I think it very likely that Carlyle had read it and more of the same sort, and delivered in his lectures certain passing shots at the stupid intention. Another bit of evidence falls in at this point. Dr. Burney in his preliminary essay on the music of the ancients writes: 'To the adoration of these [sun, moon, and stars] succeeded hero-worship, in the deification of dead kings and legislators.'[14] Such a sidelong glance at the idea is as significant as a dozen learned treatises. The latter take for granted the need to expound an

[11] Thomas Taylor, *Dissertation on the Eleusinian and Bacchic Mysteries*, 1 ff.

[12] Note to Taylor's *Iamblichus*, xiii; see also xiv, xv, 62, for examples.

[13] *Monthly Magazine and British Register*, ii, 776-779.

[14] *History of Music*, i, 207.

idea; Burney's casual inclusion takes for granted some previous knowledge.

Not the terms only, but in a few cases terse statements of Carlyle's idea of the Hero are to be found. The earliest I have discovered is in Hobbes. 'For there is in princes, and men of conspicuous power, anciently called *heroes*, a lustre and influence upon the rest of men, resembling that of the heavens.'[15] Dryden translates Georgics, Book III, 11. 54 ff.—

> The Parian marble there shall seem to move
> In breathing statues, not unworthy Jove,
> Resembling heroes, whose ethereal root
> Is Jove himself.

In *Hudibras* there is some gayety at the expense of these high talents:

> And he another way came by 't,
> Some call it Gifts, and some New-light;
> A lib'ral art, that costs no pains
> Of study, industry, or brains.[16]

Hudibras was a favorite book with Carlyle.[17] He may also have laughed at Butler's satirical comment on the extension of prudence and devoutness to the ignorant, in whom 'heavenly Wisdom does by the Confession of Men far exceed all the Subtlety and Prudence of this World.'[18] But-

[15] *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes of Malmesbury*, 443-4. Cf. also *Leviathan*, iii, 355: 'obedience to his laws, that is, in this case to the laws of nature, is the greatest worship of all'; and 98: 'for the worship which naturally men exhibit to powers invisible, it can be no other, but such expressions of their reverence, as they would towards men.' Hobbes echoes with Hero-notes. [16] *Hudibras*, Pt. I, Canto I, ii, 481-4.

[17] Froude, *First Forty Years*, i, 231.

[18] *Characters: A Modern Statesman*, 32.

ler's criticism makes in a vague way for Carlyle's belief that the statesman has a far better means of getting at the truth than others. The equipment of the statesman as conceived by the earlier writer is not that conceived by the later. Most strange of all are Samuel Roger's lines (written in 1820) upon Swiss rocks and cliffs: 'Records of the past' they are—

> That prompt to hero-worship, and excite
> Even in the least, the lowliest, as he toils,
> A reverence nowhere else or felt or feigned;
> Their chronicler great Nature; and the volume
> Vast as her works—above, below, around![19]

Had not some idea of the great man been in the air, these lines would never have been written.

Sporadic instances, more remote in terminology, abound. For example, Creuzer tells of Lampsake who rescued 'eine ganze Collonie von Phokaeern vom Tode.' 'Als die Retterin bald darauf gestorben war, hatte die dankbare Gemeine ihr Heroinehre zuerkannt.'[20] And there is Carlyle's curious misquotation in the *Death of Goethe*, '*So stirbt ein Held; anbetungsvoll.* So dies a hero; to be worshipped.'[21]

All these constitute—with innumerable other cases—what I call a 'fluid' source.

[19] Samuel Rogers, *Italy, Meillerie*, ii, 62 ff.

[20] Friederich Creuzer, *Symbolik und Mythologie der alten Völker besonders der Griechen*, iii, 44.

[21] *Essays*, iii, 106. The sentence is Karl Moor's, *Die Räuber*, 3 Akt, 2 Szene:

> "*Schwarz:* Wie herrlich die Sonne dort untergeht!
> *Moor*: (in den Anblick verschwemmt) So stirbt ein Held! Anbetenswürdig!"

Out of all this there crystallized one use of the word *hero* which may be, by contrast, a concrete source. It is in Fichte's *Grundzüge des gegenwärtigen Zeitalters*. Fichte, in addresses IV and V particularly, but also in VI and VII of this work (which suggested to Carlyle in other ways more than the title of the essay called *Characteristics*) uses the words, *Held*, *Helden*, interchangeably with *Heroen* (singular probably *Heros*) of men of a peculiar quality. We have in this document one source of Carlyle's idea itself, but here we need not go beyond what is necessary to establish the word. Fichte says:

Wer hat die rohen Stämme vereinigt, und die widerstrebenden in das Joch der Gesetze und des friedlichen Lebens gezwungen, wer hat sie darin erhalten, und die stehenden Staaten gegen Auflösung durch äussere Gewalt geschützt? —Welches auch ihre Namen seyn mögen, Heroen waren es, grosse Strecken ihrem Zeitalter zuvorgeeilt, Riesen unter den Umgebenden an körperlichen und geistiger Kraft.[22]

Notwithstanding the definiteness which here confronts us, I am of the opinion that Carlyle did not directly borrow the word. Fichte's use is perhaps a suggestion. But it seems to me that it too went into the 'float of solution' and crystallized out in Carlyle's own mind. However that may have been, we have now the facts before us.

With regard to the compound *Hero-Worship*, the same is probably true, that it is not a borrowed but to all intents

[22] Johann Gottlieb Fichte, *Sämmtliche Werke*, vii, 46. The congeniality of the idea with Carlyle's fixes the likelihood of Carlyle's having picked the word up here. It occurs frequently enough to have been established in his memory. See also 49, 50; for *Held*, *Helden*, 47, 50, 85, 86.

a created phrase. *Sartor* presents some testimony which may corroborate the preceeding point also. The nature of the case is such that no proof will do it justice. Whoever knows the working of Carlyle's mind will accede; others may hold out. It is in either event a slight affair.—In the chapter, 'Symbols,' there is the incidental record of Carlyle's progress from the conception of worshipping any 'fit' Symbol of the Idea through that of worshipping 'god-inspired men' to that of worshipping a Prophet, or 'religious Symbol.' It is several chapters farther on that the fusion of the word *hero* with *worship* takes place.

SOURCES OF THE IDEAS: THE IDEALISTIC UNIVERSE

To the sources of the ideas which were fused into the theory itself it will be necessary to give more space. Sources of material, illustrative particularly, will be omitted, however, except when they are inseparable from those of the idea.

Carlyle's idealistic universe is a basic part of his theory. The possible origins of this idealism are Plato, Kant, Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, Coleridge among the thinkers, and Goethe and perhaps Novalis among the writers. Notwithstanding the occasional use of the same words, none of Carlyle's phrases comes from Plato's doctrine that reality belongs not to the ever-changing world of sense but lies in the incorporeal essences or ideas. Moreover, the one important reference to Plato not only confuses the 'den' and 'shadows' with the 'man dwelling in the depths of the ocean,'[23] but in the first three editions actually attributed the compound

[23] MacMechan, *Heroes and Hero-Worship*, 295.

idea to Aristotle.[24] Whatever the 'haste in composition' (by which Professor MacMechan extenuates the slip), the indication is not of thorough knowledge, certainly not of discipular indebtedness. Carlyle's denial of the French witticism that no man is a hero to his own valet may have some connection with Plato's blaming those who will not follow the philosopher. But the idea is common and for Carlyle in this connection even psychologically inevitable. It seems to me after a close study of such passages as *Heroes* 8 9 and 42, that Plato, like 'the Hindu mythologist,' rather illustrated than originated or fortified the conception. Hegel also is not a source. Froude, to be sure, speaks casually of Hegel's being 'held in honor.'[25] But Professor Teufelsdröckh was 'likely if he published at all, to publish a Refutation of Hegel and Bardilli, both of whom, strangely enough, he included under a common ban.'[26] The last clause of this sentence is part of the apparatus for detaching the author from the German professor, for in the *Journal*[27] is to be found the phrase 'Bardilli's Rational Realism' which, if one remembers Hegel's 'the real is rational and the rational is real,' shows the similarity apprehended by the author of *Sartor*.

Schelling offers something more of a problem. He is one of a long list of men whose works Carlyle was reading in 1826,[28] and in the next year John Carlyle is commended for admiring him and for knowing 'that you do not understand him.'[29] How much of Schelling's doctrine was direct-

[24] Ibid., 8, note. [25] Froude, *First Forty Years*, 143.
[26] MacMechan, *Sartor Resartus*, 11.
[27] Ibid., 280; quoted from Charles Eliot Norton's manuscript copy.
[28] Froude, *First Forty Years*, i, 215. [29] Ibid., i, 248.

ly known to Carlyle is a question; he found him a man 'of cool judgment, and determinate energetic character';[30] the title of the *Methode des Academischen Studium* [*sic*], at least, attracted him.[31] The idea Carlyle stated in the following sentence: 'We speak of the Volume of Nature: and truly a Volume it is,—whose Author and Writer is God,' may have been derived from Schelling. It is closer to the doctrine that nature is visible intelligence and intelligence invisible nature than to anything I find in Fichte. If it is derived so, it may have come direct or indirectly through another German—or through Coleridge. For it is unquestionable (as I shall show fully later on) that in spite of the enduring raillery of *The Life of Sterling* Carlyle drew a considerable influence from Coleridge. All those statements setting forth the idea just instanced may indeed merely present in a new figure of speech the conception of history as the genuine Revelation or Book of Revelation. It is easy to believe however that Schellingian influence brought Carlyle to ignore the Fichtean distinction between the 'practical' (what ought to be) and the 'dogmatic' (what is). The whole matter is vague and can not be brought to book. Finally, I must record that Professor Vaughan does not count Schelling among Carlyle's 'German Masters.'[32]

With Kant the case is clear. In the first place Kant himself did not develop a genuine Idealism in this sense. The ideality of Time and Space, marvellously embodied in *Sartor*, is beyond doubt Kantean.[33] But Kant's failure to bridge the gap across which the intellectual and the moral

[30] *Essays*, i, 58. [31] Ibid., 63, note.
[32] *Essays and Studies*, Oxford, i, 168 ff. [33] *Essays*, ii, 75, 76.

world confront one another made a genuine Idealism an impossibility. To Carlyle 'the grand characteristic of Kant's Philosophy'[34] appeared to be the distinction between the Reason and the Understanding. 'His version of that, it is certain,' as Professor Vaughan says,[35] 'would have been vehemently repudiated by Kant.' He does in fact call *Verstand*, which in the *Kritik* is the faculty of judgment (*i.e.* the faculty of connecting the intuitions with each other according to certain *a priori* laws), the 'logical' faculty. And *Vernunft*, 'the faculty of arranging our judgments under a series of universal Ideas,' with him becomes the faculty of Insight or Intuition. This conception in Kant necessarily is not related to the practical problems of an idealistic universe, since he had none. But Carlyle, deriving the idealistic world elsewhither, applied his distinction to it, making the Reason the instrument for knowledge of the *Ideal-Real*, and the Understanding for knowledge of the *Apparent-Real*.[36] Consequently I have discussed the indebtedness in this connection. This also is the proper place to point out that the misapprehension of Kant's meaning was not purely Carlyle's. He partly came by it from Coleridge, as will appear presently. And Coleridge in his turn was in debt to Schelling's earlier system with its 'intellectual intuition.'[37]

[34] Ibid., i, 62. [35] *Essays and Studies*, i, 185.

[36] Goethe (*Wilhelm Meister's Lehrjahre*) speaks of Wilhelm's '*Verstand*' and '*Vernunft*,' which Carlyle translates 'his understanding and his reason' (Traill edition, iii, 286). This is Carlyle's earliest use of the words, I believe.

[37] See *Aids to Reflection*, 241, 251, 252, 247, and *The Friend*, 164, note (of which Carlyle speaks so highly in the 'Essay on Novalis,' *Essays*, ii, 58).

The idealistic universe which Carlyle imagined and made the basis of all thought, I have already defined so far as it is necessary to define it in relation to the theory of the Hero. The true source of the conception, so far as it lay outside of his picturing mind, was Fichte's writings. The Idealisms which we have surveyed are in the float of solution, of course. But the concrete borrowing to which clung all that crystallized out of the solution, was directly and indirectly from Fichte's more poetic, less systematic passages.

Professor Vaughan has made the point that Carlyle owes the materials of his speculative creed to the popular expositions of his German Master. It is an important point. For my purposes, I may restate it thus. Carlyle had some knowledge of the technical works of Fichte. His debt is not to these, but to the later and less difficult works. Furthermore, the passages in these to which in every case an idea can be traced are the vivider, simpler ones. The fact is that on the metaphysical side his interest—and therefore his debt—is next to nothing. He is struck, both by Fichte's teaching and the versions of it in Goethe and in Novalis, on the poetical side; and he is struck immensely on the moral and religious side. With characteristic 'selectiveness' he takes what is necessary to him as a man and a seer, and ignores all the 'swimbladders and vehiculatory gear.'

The basis for an idealistic world, which Carlyle found in Fichte is the 'Divine Idea.' To this he made reference in an essay in 1827[38] and again in *Heroes*. He writes in *Heroes:*

[38] Essays, i, 44.

Fichte declares first: 'That all things which we see or work with in this earth, especially we ourselves and all persons, are as a kind of vesture or sensuous Appearance: that under all this there lies, as the essence of them, what he calls the 'Divine Idea of the World': This is the Reality which 'lies at the bottom of all Appearance.'[39]

In *Über das Wesen des Gelehrten*, he read:

Die gesammte Sinnenwelt mit allen ihren Verhältnissen und Bestimmungen, und insbesondere das Leben der Menschen in dieser Sinnenwelt sind keinesweges an sich und in der That und Wahrheit dasjenige, als welches sie dem ungebildeten und natürlichen Sinne der Menschen erscheinen; sondern es ist etwas höheres und verborgenes welches der natürlichen Erscheinung bloss zum Grunde liegt. Man kann diesen höheren Grund der Erscheinung in seiner höchsten Allgemeinheit sehr schicklich nennen: die göttliche Idee.[40]

Thus in the *Plan des Ganzen*, toward the end of which occurs in a casual context one of Carlyle's very phrases: 'die Idee, die göttliche Idee, dasjenige, was der Erscheinung zu Grunde liegt' (359). From the second lecture, which is a 'nähere Bestimmung des Begriffes der göttlichen Idee" (360 ff.), we might cull a somewhat more elaborate statement. Considering Carlyle's method, it is, however, necessary to point out no more than the following. Fichte spends a half dozen pages in a 'popular' reasoned account of the matter, after which he declares:

Und so ist denn . . . für unseren Zweck hinreichend erklärt wie der Welt die göttliche Idee zu Grunde liege. . . .

[39] MacMechan, *Heroes*, 179: see also end of essay on *Richter*, the essay on *Novalis*, and *Characteristics*.

[40] Fichte: *Sämmtliche Werke*, vi, 351.

Ebenso, wie das Leben der Menschen das einzige unmittelbare Werkzeug und Organ ist der göttlichen Idee in der Sinnenwelt, so ist dasselbe menschliche Leben auch der erste und unmittelbare Gegenstand dieser Wirksamkeit (367, 368).

In *Heroes* this becomes the assurance that 'especially the Appearance of Man and his work, is but the *vesture*, the embodiment that renders' the Idea visible.[41] The Divine Idea is actually God, and 'der Mensch hat seinen Sitz nicht bloss in der Sinnenwelt sondern die eigentliche Wurzel seines Daseyns ist, wie wir gesehen haben, in Gott.'[42] The conception of which various aspects are here revealed received a popular treatment, also, in *Die Grundzüge des gegenwärtigen Zeitalters*. Nevertheless, an examination of the passage beginning 'Die Idee ist ein *selbständiger, in sich lebendiger und die Materie* belebender Gedanke'[43] will show (to anyone who doubts) how indubitable it is that, as Carlyle's general conception of an idealistic universe came from Fichte, so his special phrasing of it in *Heroes* came from *Über das Wesen des Gelehrten*.

It is a question for the psychologist whether Carlyle would have been so greatly indebted to Fichte if Goethe had not prepared him for borrowing. Certainly, Goethe's part in the transaction is great. Though it can not be gauged by a set of parallel passages, some indication may be drawn from the following data. The *Song of the Earth-Spirit* is repeatedly on his lips and on his pen. When in *Sartor* (48) the verse translation makes him untrue to the figure of Goethe's last line he prefaces a gloss.

[41] MacMechan, *Heroes*, 91. [42] Fichte, *Sämmtliche Werke*, vi, 370.
[43] Ibid., vii, 55.

GOETHE:

So schaff' ich am sausenden Webstuhl der Zeit,
Und wirke der Gottheit lebendiges Kleid.

CARLYLE:

'Tis thus at the roaring Loom of Time I ply,
And weave for God the Garment thou seest him by.

Prose gloss: . . . the Earth-Spirit in *Faust* names it '*the living visible garment of God.*'

The thought of this lyric is not a kernel in *Faust*, but a brighter length of a thread which is drawn throughout. Carlyle must have picked it up here and there, as in Mephistopheles' taunt,

Die Frage scheint mir klein
Für einen, der das Wort so sehr verachtet,
Der, weit entfernt von allem Schein,
Nur in der Wesen Tiefe trachtet.[44]

Indeed, at times he puts himself to trouble to pick up the thought. Witness the explanation he offered Hayward of the following lines from the *Prolog im Himmel:*

DER HERR:

Doch ihr, die echten Gottersöhne,
Erfreut euch der lebendig reichen Schöne!
Das Werdende, das ewig wirkt und lebt,
Umfass' euch mit der Liebe holden Schranken,
Und was in schwankender Ercheinung schwebt,
Befestiget mit dauerden Gedanken.

There is clearly [writes Carlyle] no translating of these lines on the spur of the moment; yet it seems to me the meaning of them is pretty distinct. The Lord has just remarked that man (poor fellow!) needs a devil, as travelling

[44] Szene im Studirzimmer.

companion, to spur him on by means of Denial; whereupon, turning round (to the angels and other perfect characters), he adds, 'But ye, the genuine sons of Heaven, joy ye in the living fulness of the beautiful (not of the logical, practical, contradictory, wherein man toils imprisoned); let Being (or Existence), which is everywhere, a glorious birth into higher Being, as it forever works and lives, encircle you with the soft ties of Love; and whatsoever wavers in the doubtful empire of appearance' (as all earthly things do); 'that do ye by enduring thought make firm.' Thus would *Das Werdende* (the thing that is a-being) mean no less than the universe (the visible universe) itself; and I here phrase it by 'existence,' which is everywhere a birth into higher existence (or in some such way), and make a comfortable enough kind of sense out of that quatrain.[45]

The conception lies at every turn in Goethe's works. Professor Vaughan instances the *Prooemion* of *Gott und Welt*. Take for fuller illustration the *Maximen und Reflexionen*,

Die Idee ist ewig und einzig; dass wir auch den Plural brauchen ist nicht wohlgethan. Alles, was wir gewar werden und wovon wir reden können, sind nur Manifestationen der Idee.

Wer sich vor der Idee scheut, hat auch zuletzt den Begriff nicht mehr.[46]

Vom Absoluten in theoretischem Sinne wag' ich nicht zu reden; behaupten aber darf ich: dass, wer es in der Erschienung anerkannt und immer im Auge behalten hat, sehr grossen Gewinn davon erfahren wird (214).

[45] Hayward translation, 202-3: quoted in the review in *Fraser's Magazine*, May 1833, vii, 539. [46] Goethe: *Sämmtliche Werke*, iv, 204.

The page from which the last of these is copied contains three other statements of the same thought, in one connection or another. It is not necessary to set down further evidence here, unless the speculative wish to ponder the significance of the often quoted: 'Im Ganzen, Guten, Wahren resolut zu leben.'

Through Novalis as well as through Goethe the ideal world came to Carlyle from Fichte. 'Fichte's Ausführung seiner Idee,' said Novalis,[47] 'ist wohl der beste Beweis des Idealismus.' Though he was a mystic, one 'of that class of persons, who do not recognize the "syllogistic method" as the chief organ for investigating truth,'[48] he recognized proof—and did not reject what could be proved, for no better reason than that it was susceptible of argued defense. And in 1829 Carlyle observes that Novalis' 'metaphysical creed,' so far as he can gather it from his writings, appears to be essentially the same as 'what little we understand of Fichte's' (73). The special contribution of this philosopher-poet to Carlyle's conception was merely a definitizing of Fichte's thought that *man* especially was the 'Werkzeug und Organ . . . der göttlichen Idee.' Novalis' exaggerated idealism in this particular Carlyle made much of.[49] Man being an 'Offenbarung im Fleisch,'[50] it is a simple matter to conceive as Carlyle does a mystic bond between all men.

SOURCES OF THE IDEAS: THE HERO

The Hero himself derives largely from Fichte's *Über das Wesen des Gelehrten*, *Staatslehre*, and in slight degree from

[47] *Schriften*, ii, 117. [48] *Essays*, ii, 72. [49] *Sartor Resartus*, 217.
[50] Novalis: *Schriften*, ii, 122.

Gründzuge des Gegenwärtigen Zeitalters. The *Grundzüge* is the earliest of these (1840). In it, there is more than a trace of the conception of the *Gelehrter*. The formula laid down in Vorlesung III can be easily brought into relation with the Carlylean doctrine. Fichte says of the great man who lives in the Idea:

Sein Leben an die Gattung setzen, lässt daher sich auch also ausdrücken: sein Leben an die Ideen setzen; denn die Ideen gehen eben auf die Gattung als solche, und auf ihr Leben; und so nach besteht das vernunftmässige und darum rechte, gute und wahrhaftige Leben darin, dass man sich selbst in den Ideen vergesse, keinen Genuss suche noch kenne, als den in ihnen und in der Aufopferung alles anderen Lebensgenusses für sie (VII, 37).

To put it briefly, this thought or a similar one lies behind Carlyle's theory that service to men is equal to a due and inescapable interpretation of the Divine Idea. Men who so serve, Fichte calls *Heroen* (46), as I have already pointed out in discussing the term. He defines them as

Riesen unter den Umgebenden an körperlichen und geistiger Kraft (46). . . . Ein Begriff, ein blosser Begriff von einem durch sie hervorzubringenden Zustande, der aber schlechthin ohne allen weiteren Zweck ausser ihm realisirt werden sollte, war es, der sie begeisterte (47).

Here too Carlyle found, in the last paragraph of the lecture, dealing with Alexander, that note of ruthlessness, of which critics unskilled in the elements of the subject have made too much, especially apropos of the *Frederick*.

In the fourth lecture this entire conception is reaffirmed and elaborated. We are then conducted through proofs

that the Hero is 'begeistert' not by love of fame but by love of the Idea. When a man wins through to Life in the Idea he has 'das unmittelbare Gefühl ursprünglicher, rein und schlechthin aus sich selbst hervorgehender Thätigkeit' (58). That is what I called, in speaking of Carlyle, the hero-stuff. With Fichte, as with Carlyle, it is variable. But

> nur in Absicht der Gegenstände, in welche diese ursprüngliche Thätigkeit innerhalb unseres Gefühls und Bewusstseyns ausströmt und sich darstellt, giebt es verschiedene Formen der Einen Idee; welche verschiedene Formen nun wohl auch selber verschiedene Ideen genannt werden. Ich sage ausdrücklich: innerhalb unseres Gefühls und unseres Bewusstseyns: denn nur in Bewusstseyns sind die Aeusserungen der Idee verschieden jenseits desselben ist diese Aeusserung nur Eine (58).

It is hardly to be doubted that here lay the germ of that Protean aptitude in the Carlylean Hero which troubles so many readers. Upon this ground, Fichte proceeds to analyze the most significant forms 'jenes Ausflusses der Urthätigkeit.' Of these there are four; yet his phrasing implies that he has not at all exhausted the classification. The first is that of 'die Schöne Kunst' (58). The second 'form der Idee' appears more rarely and is higher: the manifestation 'in die gesellschaftlichen Verhältnisse der Menschheit,—die Quelle der Weltbürgerlichen Ideen; im Leben die Erzeugerin des Heroismus, und die Urheberin alles Rechts und aller Ordnung unter den Menchen' (59). The third form is 'aus dem Gedanken: oder die Wissenschaft' (60); and a fourth, 'die umfassendste, alles in sich

aufnehmende und durchaus an jedes Gemüth zu bringende Form der Idee, das Hinströmen aller Thätigkeit und alles Lebens, mit Bewusstseyn, in den Einen, unmittelbar empfundenen Urquell des Lebens, die Gottheit: oder—die Religion'(60). Carlyle is more graphic, less theoretical; but for that, we have here the hero as Divinity, Prophet, and Priest, in the fourth; as King and Man of Letters in the second; as Poet in the first. Carlyle devoted himself to no philosopher as such.

Just when Carlyle read the *Grundzüge* can not be said; but we can be reasonably certain he was familiar with those lectures before he wrote his own *Characteristics*, which was published in December, 1831. With *Über das Wesen des Gelehrten* (lectures delivered by Fichte in 1805 and published in 1806) he was familiar at least by 1827, for in this year he quoted from the document in the essay on *The State of German Literature*. He also quoted from *Über das Wesen* in *The Hero as Man of Letters*[51]. From these two sources we may ascertain that he was conscious of deriving from Fichte's book of 1806 the following ideas not already accounted for in considering the idealism of the 'Divine Idea':

To the mass of men this Divine Idea of the world lies hidden: yet to discern it, to seize it, and live wholly in it, is the condition of all genuine virtue, knowledge, freedom; and the end, therefore, of all spiritual effort in every age. Literary men are the appointed interpreters of the Divine Idea; a perpetual priesthood, we might say, standing forth, generation after generation, as the dispensers and living types of God's everlasting wisdom. . . . In every

[51] MacMechan, *Heroes*, 179.

century, every man who labors, be it in what province he may, to teach others, must first have possessed himself of the Divine Idea, or, at least, be with his whole heart and his whole soul striving after it. If, without possessing it or striving after it, he abide diligently by some material practical department of knowledge, he may indeed still be (says Fichte, in his rugged way) a 'useful hodman'; but should he attempt to deal with the whole, and to become an architect, he is, in strictness of language, Nothing.

Carlyle then quotes in translation those sentences of Fichte's which define the Literary Man as 'a man who *has* studied';[52] the man who strives after the Divine Idea, 'a progressing and self-unfolding literary man, a Student'; the man who strives not for the Idea but for the 'outward form and the letter of learned culture . . . Bungler (Stümper).'[53] All this is restated in *Heroes* (179, 180, 181) with one addition. 'Fichte calls the Man of Letters . . . a Prophet or . . . a Priest.'

Here are, plain enough, Carlyle's Hero as Literary Man with an implication of some other categories, his quack hero,[54] and his ordinary man who moves in the 'practical sphere.'

It will, I think, appear that Carlyle's acknowledgment is not equal to the borrowing. The reason is doubtless that he borrowed more than he knew. It would seem that Pro-

[52] The passages translated are to be found in Fichte's *Sämmtliche Werke*, vi, 353-5 and 358-60. The phrases here quoted read in the original: 'Ein Mann, der ausstudirt hat' (355); 'ein angehender und sich bildender Gelehrter, ein Studirende' (355); 'die äussere Form und der Buchstaben der gelehrten Bildung . . . Stümper' (358).

[53] *Essays*, i, 44, 45.

[54] MacMechan, *Heroes*, 14, 51, 164, 178, 201, 227, 249, 277.

fessor Vaughan's attribution of the doctrine of Heroes to what Carlyle found 'between the lines of *Das Wesen des Gelehrten*' but 'written large in the more systematic exposition of the *Staatslehre*'[55] is misleading, if not downright wrong. We shall most conveniently come at Carlyle's borrowing from the source he himself indicated, by disposing of the *Staatslehre* first.

In the *Staatslehre* (lectures delivered in 1813; published 1820), the doctrine significant in this connection is as follows:

Wissenschaftslehre also ist vollkommen freie, sich selbst im Besitz habende, *Erkenntnis* (IV, 382). . . . *Wakrhaft frei*, als Handelnder, ist nur der, welcher nach solchen reinen Begriffen handelt (338). 'Da muss aber das innere Auge gebildet seyn zum Ersehen dieses Uebersinnlichen; diese Bildung des Auges aber ist die Wissenschaftlehre (389).

Hence the study of philosophy yields at the same time the power of free judgment and the faculty of perception:

Alle Wissenschaft ist thatbegründend. . . . Hieraus ergeben sich zwei Grundstände: das *Volk*, und die *Gelehrten*, *Wissenschaftlichen* (394-5). . . . Den letzteren fällt anheim die *Weitersicht;* sie sind freie Künstler der Zukunft und ihrer Geschichte, die besonnenen Baumeister der Welt aus jenem, als dem bewusstlosen Stoffe. . . . *Volk*. . . . gründet sich auf die reine Unwissenheit des eigenen Standpunctes, weil es einen anderen nicht kennt, den Gegensatz nicht hat, welcher alle Unterscheidung erst bestreitet, und sich positiv als das Rechte hinstellt, ist Pöbel, und dies Wesen Bauernstolz (395).

If by 'written large' Professor Vaughan meant that the doctrine was stated in very broad outlines, this summary

[55] *Essays and Studies*, i, 193.

bears him out. But he cannot mean that, for he quotes in translation the paragraphs in which Fichte asserts the duty of men, who have 'the knowledge and the power,' to force others 'under the yoke of Right.'[56] Evidently he regards a casual element of Carlyle's theory as essential. When he says Carlyle stripped the conception of the qualifications with which Fichte safeguarded it, he entirely forgets that the force used by Carlyle's Hero *in theory* predepends upon an ordinary man with Reverence or Loyalty. It is not 'Might makes right, the land is lawless.' With Carlyle, I must once more repeat, Might makes Right, because only the Right which is based on a kindling insight into the Divine Reality can possess Might. The phrase was, it may be, unfortunately chosen, loaded as it was with old and susceptible of new pragmatic meaning; none the less his own idea is a 'safe' one. These considerations Professor Vaughan has for the moment put aside when he finds the doctrine of Heroes written large in the *Staatslehre*, with special reference to the 'von Gott eingesetzte Zwingherr.'

In *Über das Wesen* Fichte presents the following conception of the Scholar. A Gelehrter is one to whom 'ein bestimmter Theil des Inhaltes dieser göttlichen Idee von der Welt' is 'zugänglich und begreiflich,' and by whom 'unter der Leitung dieses Begriffes' this part may be impressed on the 'Sinnenwelt' and expressed in it (VI, 351-2). Two objects may imbue the scholar—'um durch Mittheilung an Andere die Erkenntniss der Idee unter den Men-

[56] Ibid., i, 194.

schen zu erhalten und zu verbreiten, oder durch unmittelbares Handeln auf die Sinnenwelt diese Idee in ihr darzustellen' (352). The means toward a comprehension of the accessible portion of the Divine Idea is 'das Ganze derjenigen Erziehung und Ausbildung, welche ein Zeitalter die gelehrte Bildung nennt' (352). Consequently 'ist nur derjenige ein Gelehrter zu nennen, welcher durch die gelehrte Bildung des Zeitalters hindurch zur Erkenntniss der Ideen gekommen' (352-3). The significance of the word *Gelehrter* is, then, 'ein Mann, der ausstudirt hat' (355). That man who arrives at knowledge of the Idea through any means other than this 'gelehrte Bildung' may be 'ein höchst vorzüglicher Mensch, aber kein Gelehrter,' for lacking a knowledge of the Age he will lack the means by which to communicate his theory or give it practical realization (353). Only Scholars in the true sense should take a hand in guiding and ordering the affairs of men (354). Of the Scholar Fichte says further: 'dieser Mensch liebt die Idee und lebt in der Idee' (356). This is probably Goethe's 'Im ganzen, guten, Wahren resolut zu leben,' and certainly Carlyle's 'to live wholly in the Idea.' The Gelehrter 'wird begleitet sein ganzes Leben von den unerschütterlichen Bewusstseyn, das er einig sey mit dem göttlichen Leben,'—a thought Carlyle restated often with particular reference to his Heroes.

There are, according to *Über das Wesen*, five principal ways in which 'die göttliche Idee durch Menschen in der Sinnenwelt sich äussert und darstellt.' The commonest are

> die der Gesetzgebung, die der Naturkenntniss und Naturherrschaft, die der Religion. . . . Es ist sichtbar, dass jeder

dieser Hauptzweige wiederum seine einzelnen Theile habe. . . . Rechnet man nur noch dazu die Wissenschaft der göttlichen Idee, sowohl *dass* es eine solche Idee gebe, als die ihres Inhaltes im Ganzen, oder in einzelner besonderen Theilen; ferner die Kunst und Fertigkeit, die klar erkannte Idee in der Sinnenwelt wirklich dazustellen . . . Derjenige Punct, wo der Gelehrte übergeht in den freien Künstler, ist der Punct der Vollendung des Gelehrten (370-1, 376).

Even here on the highest rung untiring industry must support and fulfill the growth of Genius (376), which is 'ein Übernatürliches, nach einem anderen Übernatürlichen Hinziehendes in Menschen, welches die Verwandschaft desselben mit der geistigen Welt, und seine ursprüngliche Heimath in dieser Welt andeutet' (373). The man who lives content in belief of his own genius has no genuine gift and his product, being produced without labor, is an inanity (378).

Selbstbeschauung, Selbstbewunderung und Selbstlobpreisung . . . und der aus ihnen entspringenden Unfleiss und die Vershmähung des in der Niederlage der gelehrten Bildung schon Verhandenen, zeugen sicher von Mangel an wahrem Talent: sich selbst vergessen und verlieren in der Sache, und vor ihrem Gedanken zu keinem Gedanken an sich selber kommen können, ist die unabtrennlichen Begleitung jedes wahren Talentes' (379).

These achieved are marks of genius—but not infallible signs. On the man who has achieved or has failed to achieve, a judgment can be passed; of him 'aber der noch auf dem Wege sich befindet,' neither genius nor lack of genius can be predicated (379, 380).

What Carlyle's debt was to the conception here fully set forth is plain enough. The first great difference between

the Hero and the Scholar results from the different Idealistic Universes in which they find themselves. Carlyle's Divine Reality is contemporary with and even in a sense coincides with Appearance. Fichte's Divine Idea or Reality is a goal toward which Appearance is at any moment only a stage in the progress.[57] Carlyle makes nothing of this 'Fortentwicklung.' As I have pointed out, he treats the unrolling ages not as an evolution primarily, a progress toward a goal, but as an ironic fact of immediate importance. Consequently the Hero looks through Appearance into Reality, which lies behind and under Appearance in a physical sense as well as a metaphysical; the Scholar looks through Appearance into Reality which lies behind it in a metaphysical sense purely.[58] It follows then that the Hero possesses Insight, whereas the Scholar has foresight, 'Weitersicht' (IV, 395). The second difference is this: the Scholar achieves foresight, knowledge of the Divine Idea, which is God's plan of ultimate perfection, through the 'Learned Culture' of his age; the Hero, on the other hand, is possessed of Insight by his very nature.

Carlyle's conception of the Hero, then, is borrowed in its broad outlines and in some particulars from Fichte. But it is essentially changed to fit the Ideal World which

[57] The simplest statement of this conception that I have found is this: 'Gott hat die Welt überhaupt gedacht, nicht nur, wie sie ist und sich findet, sondern auch also, wie sie sich durch sich selbst weiter gestalten soll! . . . ' (Fichte's *Sämmtliche Werke*, vi, 393, *Uber das Wesen*).

[58] To illustrate for the Scholar: 'Der Regent nach unserem Bilde blickt in seiner Würdigung des Geschlectes über desjenige, was sie *wirklich* sind, hinaus, auf das, was sie im *göttlichen Begriffe* sind, und diesem zufolge, werden können, werden sollen, und einst ganz seyn werden' (Ibid., vi, 423).

Carlyle figured for himself. And this Idealism came largely from Goethe's figurative language, in the outward cycle of influence, as we saw, and from Carlyle's picture-seeing, geometry-trained mind in the inner cycle.

Concerning the relation of D. Heynig's *Theorie der Sämmtlichen Religionsarten* to *Heroes* I have been able to come to no satisfactory conclusion. It may not have been a direct source, yet to call it one of the 'fluid' sources seems hardly adequate. It supplies another of those cases in which the reader carries away a general impression of relationship to which no culling of passages can do justice Heynig's book, now almost impossible to find,[59] was doubtless accessible to Carlyle: it had been summarized in 1801 in the *Retrospect of German Literature* of the *Monthly Magazine* (XI, 646). The notable source probabilities are these.[60] Heynig's *Vorrede* dwells upon the possibility of harmonizing the duality of religion and philosophy. Such a harmony was one of Carlyle's goals in *Heroes*. Heynig's *Einleitung* ('Was sind die Menschen?') asserts that man is the first of creatures, to whom religion is a necessity, and concerning whom his religion is the most significant fact. Both these ideas—the second explicitly—appear in *Heroes*. Further, Heynig asserts that when in the course of civilization men found themselves in a world in which sun, moon, and stars 'helped' little, they turned to 'geschickte, erfahrne, kluge Menschen, die Andere bey ihren Unternehmungen glück-

[59] The copy used for this occasion is bound up with several other works, in the New York Theological Seminary Library.

[60] The general similarities may be seen in MacMechan, *Heroes*, 4, 12, 13, 18, 22, 25, 34, 35, 136, 139, 140.

lich an und fortzuleiten verstanden.' At this point came forward 'die ersten grossen Männer,' men who by their 'Thaten,' 'Muth,' 'Klugheit und Einsichten,' understood more, achieved more;'die gute Enrichtungen trafen, treffende Gesetze und Rathschläge vorbrachten, die tapfere und glückliche Anführer waren, dadurch an die Spitze von ganzen Völkern gelangten, und sie auch nach ihren Rath und Willen regierten.' These were 'bemerkt, angesehen und bewundert.' They robbed fetishes and stars of their reverence and themselves took the place of worship, became 'die nächsten und natürlichsten Gegenstände der Bewunderung, Liebe, Verehrung; auch wohl der Furcht und der Anbetung . . . ; bey ihrem Leben wurden sie verehrt und bewundert,und nach ihrem Tode angebetet' (42). Here are terms and ideas of the lecture of the Hero as Divinity especially. Carlyle's repeated statement that great men can be worshiped as Gods and Prophets only in the early ages is made and elaborated by Heynig (45-49, especially 46. Cf. *Heroes* 48, 49). And in the midst of all we find this suggestive, even stimulating sentence: 'Dies alles liegt nicht nur in der Natur der Dinge und der Menschen, sondern lässt sich auch aus der Geschichte ganz sicher erweisen'—a sentence which may have been to Carlyle a moving cause.

SOURCES OF THE IDEAS: THE ORDINARY MAN

The Ordinary Man whose relation to the Hero Carlyle defined as one of obedience in loyalty or reverence is sometimes treated with such harshness by Carlyle as to make one think he drew his idea from the 'useful hodman' of

Fichte.[61] The latter defines their quality in these words: 'Ihre Tugend besteht in pünktlichen Gehorsam und der Vermeidung alles Selbstdenkens, und über ihr Geschäft Selbsturtheilens,'[62] and again 'redlicher Fleiss aber und Ergebung in seine Natur lässt sich jedem anmuthen' (381). In general, whatever the debt for this passing phrase, Carlyle speaks respectfully and even with vague awe of ordinary men. And in that aspect his debt is to Goethe rather than to Fichte.

In *Wilhelm Meister*, in the passage in which Carlyle found the favored phrase 'Es leuchtet mir ein,' Goethe describes the threefold Reverence.[63] The passage is too well known to require quotation. 'The Three' cry to Wilhelm, 'Reverence! All want it, perhaps you yourself.' There is the Reverence for what is above us, expressed in the Ethnic Religion; for what is beneath us, in the Christian Religion; for what is about us, in the Philosophical Religion. The true religion springs from the union of all three. Carlyle's use of the word Reverence takes from this context a note of respect and awe. He already had the basis for the mystic bond.

The vague conception at which Carlyle thus arrived became plastic under another influence. It was no accident that drove him to praise Abbot Samson or indeed to conceive *Past and Present*. He was, as the mere fact of his having evolved his theory of the Hero shows and no reader of his work can doubt, temperamentally a feudalist. Now feudalism represents at once the apparently contradictory

[61] *Essays*, i, 44. [62] Fichte, *Sämmtliche Werke*, vi, 354.
[63] Carlyle's translation, ii, 265 ff.

principles of personal loyalty and a contractual relation. These Carlyle reconciles simply by turning the contract into a spiritual bond and making of loyalty the outward symbol of that bond. And the feudal master and man, *princeps* and *comites*, abbot and convent, afford him the visible tangible figure of his abstraction. He drew from Burke or perhaps through Coleridge from Burke a vivifying sense of this old relationship clothed with the new significance. For to Burke

there actually was an element of mystery in the cohesion of men in societies, in political obedience, in the sanctity of contract: . . . When reason and history had contributed all that they could to the explanation, it seemed to him as if the vital force, the secret of organization, the building framework, must still come from the impenetrable regions beyond reasoning and beyond history.[64]

SOURCES OF IDEAS: RELATION OF GREAT MEN AND THE WORLD: MUTABILITY OF THE HERO STUFF

Whence Carlyle derived the germ of the idea which I have named the mutability of the hero stuff and the cognate idea that the form of the hero depends upon the need of the world at the moment is clearly indicated in the essay on *The State of German Literature*. 'Literary men,' we read, have, according to Fichte, to interpret the Divine Idea,

in their writings and actions, in such particular form as their own particular times require it in. For each age, by the law of its nature, is different from every other age, and demands a different representation of the Divine Idea, the essence of which is the same in all; so that the literary

[64] John Morley, *Burke*, 163.

man of one century is only by mediation and re-interpretation applicable to the wants of another.[65]

The ascription is even more definitely made in the fifth of the *Heroes* lectures. 'The Man of Letters is sent hither specially that he may discern for himself, and make manifest to us, this same Divine Idea: in every new generation it will manifest itself in a new dialect; and he is there for the purpose of doing that. Such,' says Carlyle, 'is Fichte's phraseology.'[66] As a fact this is *not* Fichte's phraseology; it is Carlyle's, as is the idea itself. At most the idea is Fichte's by virtue of Carlyle's neglect in general, and in this special case, his misuse of the German's 'Learned Culture of the Age.'

'Die gelehrte Bildung des Zeitalters' is 'die Art der Bildung nun, durch welche, nach der Annahme eines Zeitalters, man zum Besitz dieser Idee, oder dieser Ideen komme.'[67] Fichte speaks of 'die ursprüngliche göttliche Idee von einem bestimmten Standpuncte in der Zeit!' (368) In speaking of the impulse ('der Trieb') called genius ('Genie'), he insists that it will always manifest itself as a particular genius ('ein besonderes Genie, für Philosophie, Poesie, Naturbeobachtung, Gesetzgebung und dergleichen'), never as genius in common or in the abstract. This particular genius may possess its mark or bent by innate characteristic. Or it may be born 'im Allgemeinen als Genialität' and manifest itself in the special department ('Fach') 'durch den ohngefähren Gang der Bildung' (374). We have already seen that Fichte held that each age had its

[65] *Essays*, i, 44. [66] MacMechan, *Heroes*, 180.
[67] Fichte, *Sämmtliche Werke*, vi, 371.

own 'gelehrte Bildung' or culture. If Carlyle, in memory rather than with the text before him, equated the culture of the age with 'Bildung' as used in the discussion of Genius, we have probably here the source of the idea of mutable hero-stuff and of the relation of the age to the form the hero takes. At the least, we have a suggestion which would easily lead to the Carlylean doctrine. Carlyle's summary quoted above is reasonably correct, and the development of his idea entirely reasonable.

THE GENERAL PROBLEM OF CARLYLE'S INDEBTEDNESS TO GERMAN THINKERS

It is demonstrable that Carlyle's great concrete borrowings are from the Germans. His debt to Kant for his distinction between Reason and Understanding; his debt to Fichte and Goethe, especially, for the idealistic universe; his debt to Fichte for a considerable part of his hero—such definable, documentable debts I have attempted to determine. Of this Carlyle himself may not have been conscious. It is in no wise specific, rather general and to the drudging mind even vague. Yet it may be indicated with exactness.

One of the commonplaces of Kantean criticism points out the gulf which yawns between the moral world and the intellectual world of the critical philosophy. Kant's world was not unified: there are things we can know, upon which we put the *a priori* marks of our knowledge; there are other things we cannot know—the *Ding-an-sich* and so on. Fichte attempted to bridge this gulf. Metaphysically he went to work, not as Kant had done to deduce the categories from phenomena but to find his categories in

the very nature of consciousness. Practically he unites the two worlds by a doctrine of endless finite striving toward the infinite. His practical doctrine is founded in his metaphysical. Now Carlyle only partly understood the metaphysical method, or at most regarded it as only partially useful, as set forth in the *Wissenschaftslehre*. The practical aspect struck him fairly and hard. But instead of founding his conception in Fichte's metaphysic, he introduced it without any genuine foundation—for what need has a seer for such?—into Goethe's figurative version of Fichte's idealistic universe. Of it he then makes a theory of conduct, and from the theory of conduct a theory of judgment or valuation which presents itself in his work in the special phases of historical and biographical and critical methods. His great man with his insight is merely the bridge between the world of *a priori* perception and the world of things-in-themselves, called the Divine Idea or whatever. To build this bridge Carlyle tore materials from any structure that came in his way, and he was not careful to use material for precisely or even approximately the purposes for which it had been originally intended. Consequently Carlyle's bridge would for Kant have no whit lessened the gulf; and Fichte would have repudiated it as an illegitimate result of his teaching. That it has the vigor and genius of the illegitimate sport is another matter. It does differently, illogically it may be, what Fichte himself had done—it sets up a rule of conduct by reconciling freedom and necessity. For it frees the spirit from the mechanical universe and binds it through the Hero to the spiritual. And in that regard it is a phase of the great change of thought which goes under the name of the Transcendental Movement.

CHAPTER V

SOURCES OF THE HERO THEORY II

'LE RÉSUMÉ DE TOUTES LES DOCTRINES CONTEMPORAINES'

Ten years after the Hero Lectures were delivered, Émile Montégut made in a French review the following observation: '*Le culte des héros* n'est pas autre chose que le résumé de toutes les doctrines contemporaines, sur les grands hommes, résumé entrepris pour démolir ces doctrines et les transformer en les ennoblissant.'[1] Exhaustive study of the facts supports this inspired guess of a keen reviewer. Carlyle created his theory out of the float of solution. Around an idea, picked up in Fichte, he unconsciously, or at most half consciously, assembled material of many sorts. But, remarkably enough, no element that goes to make up the result is at all out of tune with the era in which Carlyle generated his conception. Though the final doctrine may be regarded as anti-democratic, each component part, each influence is of the time. The Hero-cult is indeed no more than a brilliant summary of 'toutes les doctrines contemporaines, sur les grands hommes.'

Not once did Carlyle go, as it were, over the head of his age for his ideas. He echoes Plato vaguely, but the eighteenth century was saturated with Plato, and the French Revolutionists had fed on him. Of Plutarch the same is true. Confucian thought, which offers so many parallels to Carlyle's ideas—even beyond those of the great man—

[1] *Revue des deux Mondes* (1850), 7, 737.

was creeping into England, notably in the writing of Sir William Jones. The Messiah was known to all Bible readers: Joseph Cottle's *Messiah* was published in 1815. Some of the practical results of German thought were introduced by William Taylor of Norwich in his splashy reviews and histories; Scott made one phase known by his translation of *Götz;* and before Carlyle had done much reading, Coleridge's *Friend* had presented English readers (though perhaps not familiarized them) with much metaphysical lore. In his own work with the Germans Carlyle was not the pioneer, but the great pioneer. Men everywhere were preoccupied with the idea of a great man.

> Some must be great. Great offices will have
> Great talents,

sang Cowper in *The Task*. Wordsworth invoked Milton and lauded some others; Coleridge talked—and wrote—difficult stuff about the 'Clerisy'; the Byronic hero (who is more than a romantic bleeding-heart) set the thoughtful to their thought, though he also made the silly pose; and Shelley depicted some astonishing Titans. Rob Roy fascinated first the great Lake Poet on his highland tour, then the Wizard of the North. And Scott filled every mind with feudal, picturesque ideals of loyalty and headship. The Camden Society's publication of *Chronica Jocelini de Brakelonda* in 1845 had for its purpose, so far as editor Rokewood knew, nothing more than to equip scholars with another document for studying this feudal past. I wish to emphasize the significance of the fact that the chronicle came to Carlyle not by his own research, but by that of

others. He used what was easily accessible to whoever could read Latin. Norse customs and heroes fascinated Carlyle at both ends of his literary career,—but England and Germany had before the turn of the century been delving in that field. In New England the great Channing, writing of Napoleon, had distinguished moral greatness, intellectual greatness, and greatness in action, in favor of the first and second.[2] The figure of Washington, even among men bound to equalitarian theories, was beginning to take on heroic proportions. And, in the days when the French Revolution had not yet found a sure leader, Burns, though a man was a man for a' that, had English words of reverence for General Washington and appealed to Alfred and to Wallace. The world had fresh examples of men of genius who succeeded or failed in various ways. The great man of action was Napoleon; the great man who consummated his own individuality was Goethe; the genius who could not quite successfully dominate his milieu was Burns; Johnson talked himself into a partial success and Voltaire into a doubtful one.[3] In short, it cannot be said the Carlyle revived an old idea in an untoward age. His Hero is no untimely bloom fostered under glass. Yet this we are often led to infer when we are told how out of keeping with the nineteenth century the Hero is.

I shall attempt now to make clear that the theory of the Hero is merely the final, high doctrine in a movement which had been for some years under way, at the same

[2] W. E. Channing's *Analysis of the Character of Buonaparte* was reviewed in the *London Times* of January 29, 1828.

[3] MacMechan, *Sartor Resartus*, 142, 145-6, 232-3, 276.

time that I indicate as many as possible of the fluid sources. In other words, I mean to show that the idea of the Great Man was in the air. In some cases my method must be that of assaying specimens. For the most important cases, I shall proceed more elaborately.

Thinkers whose theory had been equalitarian, men whose hope was staked upon Liberty and Equality, learned something from the aftermath of the French upheaval. The most striking of Edmund Burke's predictions had been that if in all that turmoil a great man arose the world would have assurance of an unparalleled despotism. It was the inevitable reaction. 'Even Democracy itself, the ostensible denial of all worship, found its soldier in Napoleon, and worshipped.'[4] Such is Carlyle's comment. In the years between Burke's *Reflections* and Carlyle's *The French Revolution*, many a writer came to put his faith in leadership.

The roll-call of the great English writers of the first third of the nineteenth century reveals an interesting state of things. Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley, Scott—each has his theory for us. Even Keats—so little concerned with these matters when he died—opens Book III of *Endymion* with an attack on the false-great:

> There are who lord it o'er their fellow men
> With most prevailing tinsel: . . .
> . . . they still are dight
> By the blear-eyed nations in empurpled vests,
> And crowns, and turbans. . . .
> Are then regalities all gilded masks?
> No, there are throned seats unscalable
> But by a patient wing, a constant spell. . . .

[4] *The Works of Thomas Love Peacock*, ii, 36.

And he proceeds to describe the true great—who happen to be not political figures. Even Keats brushed this important idea.

The lesser men, too, though usually not concerned with a grounded philosophy, touch the idea. For example, Charles Lloyd's portrait of Coleridge in *Desultory Thoughts in London* is a watery picture of the great man, who contrived to reconcile freedom with necessity:

> The child of impulse ever to appear,
> And yet through duty's path strictly to steer (19).

In Campbell's *Pleasures of Hope* not without leaders shall Freedom gain her goal. Down the page marches a line of great men:

> Hope, for a season, bade the world farewell,
> And Freedom shriek'd—as KOSCIUSKO fell! (17)
>
> Oh! once again to Freedom's cause return
> The patriot Tell–the BRUCE OF BANNOCKBURN! (18)

Plato, Sidney, Scipio, Tully, Brutus, Hampden, Shakespeare, are invoked. The poet awaits

> That friend of Nature, whose avenging hands
> Shall burst the Libyan's adamantine bands.
> Who, sternly marking on his native soil
> The blood, the tears, the anguish, and the toil,
> Shall bid each righteous heart exult, to see
> Peace to the slave, and vengeance on the free! (20)

Whether Lincoln or another, it is a leader that is awaited —one who by 'the march of genius and the powers of man' shall, like Prometheus, bring the fire from heaven (18).

Little would here be won by accumulating specimens that will not be gained by weighing the evidence of the whole work of each of the more important men. Nevertheless, I shall risk assaying another minor document.

The shimmering satire of Thomas Love Peacock is especially significant, for satire in itself indicates the importance of its object and depends for its effects upon the widespread knowledge of whatever it satirizes. *Maid Marian* tells more about the heroic outlaw tradition of the first quarter of the century than forty analyses of *Die Räuber*, *The Borderers*, *Götz*, *Osorio*, *Prometheus Unbound*, and the rest. Of Robin Hood, the sheriff says: 'He holds that in giving to boors and old women what he takes from priests and peers, he does but restore to the former what the latter had taken from them; and this the impudent varlet calls distributive justice.'[4] Says the Friar, upon another occasion, William of Normandy and Robin of Sherwood 'differ, indeed, in this, that William took from the poor and gave to the rich, and Robin takes from the rich and gives to the poor' (55-6). Here is laughing recognition of the leveling hero. He turns up again in the Articles of the forest society. The Articles of Equity and of Hospitality are based upon the principle that from him that hath shall be taken to give to him that hath nothing (61-2). To administer 'natural justice,' to rectify 'the inequalities of human condition' (87) is the object of Robin, of whom Richard says: 'Braver heart and juster hand I never yet found' (96). There is also on pages 56-57 a satiric passage on Right and Might. 'There is no right but might: and to say that might overcomes right is to say that right over-

comes itself . . . . Your right,' says the friar to the baron, 'was the stronger in Arlingford, and ours is the stronger in Sherwood. Your right was right as long as you could maintain it; so is ours.'

Among the books without which *Maid Marian* could not have been written is Scott's *Rob Roy*. *Ivanhoe* may or may not have preceded Peacock's story in conception; *Rob Roy* was published four years before Peacock's work. On the last page we read that Rob Roy MacGregor 'is still remembered in his country as the Robin Hood of Scotland, the dread of the wealthy, but the friend of the poor.' Here is struck a note the reechoes through many of the Waverly Novels and some of the poems. The hero of the story may be as wooden as the hardest critic thinks or as human as Chesterton believes; yet in most of the books he has the marvelous knack of turning up to help the needy or distressed and confound the powerful and overbearing. Now this is, I know, the mark of a certain type of plot: the handsome hero rushes in to the rescue just as the voracious beast springs upon its victim. In Scott, however, we have something in the character of the hero—and the fact that we have this is after all one assurance that the work will endure—to make us say to ourselves: 'Of course.' We are persuaded quite unconsciously that our hero has a kind of insight into the facts and a true foresight, that understanding the present and foreseeing the morrow he bends circumstances to his will. When he appears then in the nick of time, we may be pleasantly surprised, but we are never (at least never at Scott's best) astonished and filled with

doubt. These able men, and women, employ their gifts in behalf of the distressed, the misfortunate, the wronged. I do not deny that the reversal of fortune which is involved in completing such situations is especially romantic and suited to the historical novel. I merely point out that we have a conception of the great man—a being gifted with understanding and foresight and with ability to make good his excellent intention.

Certain of Scott's tales do not, of course, fit this case. *Woodstock*, *Redgauntlet*, *The Bride of Lammermoor*, belong in another gallery, perhaps. But *Ivanhoe*, *Quentin Durward*, *Guy Mannering*, *Kenilworth*, *The Heart of Midlothian*, *The Abbot*, *The Monastery*, *Rob Roy*, are enough to fix the type and establish a fact powerful enough for influence. In the last, MacGregor's mysterious interpositions strike one with the same sense of supernatural naturalness with which we receive an unpredicted thunderstorm. *Ivanhoe*, at the head of the list, contains more than one figure of this heroic temper. The Black Knight, the titular hero, and Robin— these at least— understand what are the troubles of Isaac, of Rebecca, of Rowena, foresee how they will develop, and though they do not forestall (for forestalling does not make good narrative though it make comfortable living), they interfere at the crisis. Briefly, then, the hero of Scott's story is not first of all a protagonist at odds with his environment, and then either equal to the fight or not as the case may be. He is a superior man with gifts of a special order. He is the novelist's version of the Hero.

I shall now proceed to analyze the political doctrines of the four great English poets of the era. Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, and Byron may be allowed to offer in the sum total of their works a composite of the doctrines current in England. If at the outset anyone objects that Carlyle disapproved the writings of these poets, I shall remind him that to disapprove he had to know them. Moreover, I am arguing for an unconscious influence at most; at least, for an influence reflected first by the earlier writer and afterwards (from the same source possibly) by Carlyle. In any case one must remember the *Early Letters* (March 18, 1821): 'Let me be doing with Lake Poets, Mystics, or any trash I can fall in with,' and must not forget that the testimony of the *Reminiscences* ('His work'—of Wordsworth—'I knew; but never considerably reverenced,—could not, on attempting.') is subdued to an old vision; that Carlyle must have taken in a great deal at Highgate to give his account of Coleridge, and that he had already praised *The Friend;* and finally that before he opened his Goethe, he had closed his Byron, which figuratively means that he once leaned heavily upon him.

WORDSWORTH AND THE GREAT MAN

Wordsworth's biographers have always made much of the crisis of his sympathy and love for France. And it is beyond question that with him, as with Coleridge, that crisis is the psychological key to the change from republicanism to a more conservative point of view.[5] His new doc-

[5] See *Ode*, 'Who rises on the banks of Seine.'

trine he delivered in his great tract *Concerning the Relations of Great Britain, Spain, and Portugal, to each other, and to the common enemy, at this crisis, and specifically as effected by the Convention of Cintra.* What has never been adequately, if at all, pointed out is that the conception which lifts this tract upon the Miltonic plane includes a fusion of the fundamental ideas of equality and worth of men and of their capacity for sovereignity—though not under the earlier Rousseauistic nomenclature—with a conservative, certainly a less radical, idea of great men. Wordsworth stands in a new light with regard to 'the paradoxical reveries of Rousseau,' but he none the less clings to the solider parts of them. These have coalesced into a new identity—'the wisdom of the people.' For the present two sentences will suffice as testimony. 'This was the feeling of the people; an awful feeling: and it is from these oracles that rulers are to learn.' 'The People might see, upon great occasions,—in the practice of its rulers—a more adequate reflection of its own wisdom and virtue.'[6]

Wordsworth's conception of a great man is implicit in all but his very earliest writing. It is explicit and even elaborated in the great tract and in the essay contributed to *The Friend* in 1809, not many months after the tract was written. The great man is marked by '*intellectual* courage' which is found with 'talents matured by experience without which it cannot exist at all'; or with 'the rapid insight of peculiar genius, by which the fitness of an act may be instantly determined, and which will supply higher motives than

[6] *Prose Works of William Wordsworth*, ii, 205.

mere talents can furnish for encountering difficulty and danger, and will suggest better resources for diminishing or overcoming them,' or with that fixed and habitual 'principle, which implies the absence of all selfish anticipations, . . . and the inward disavowal of any tribunal higher or more dreaded than the mind's own judgment upon its own act.' Best of all—at its highest—it is found with all three in one man (i, 129 ff.). These gifts yield 'the supreme comprehension of intellect and passion,' (i, 208) they lead to 'elevation, the absolute possession of the individual mind, . . . a consistency of harmony or the being within itself, which no outward agency can reach to disturb or impair' (i, 84 ff.). This high quality governs the actions of heroes, statesmen, legislators, and warriors, produces the works of pure science and of the 'combined faculties.' The conception is the stuff of Wordsworth's most imposing political thinking and of his long-brewing philosophy of education; moreover, it was wrought into the fibre of many of his greatest poems—even before the Convention of Cintra pamphlet was undertaken.[7] And in that conception the *vox populi* continued to hold a place, for into the generation about him the great man directs his 'quickest glance.' From it he learns as from an oracle,—but the power to determine what is oracular in the *vox populi* is enshrined in the great man's 'elevation,' for he disavows any higher tribunal. The great man is a *selective* focal point of the wisdom and virtue of nature and of ordinary men.

[7] Wordsworth wrote in 1840 to Professor Reed: 'It was . . . gratifying to me . . . that you should have considered the Tract on the Convention of Cintra in relation to my poems' (*Memoirs of William Wordsworth*, Boston 1851, i, 418).

In Wordsworth's poetry are to be found enough restatements of this conception to establish it as a cardinal doctrine of the poet. There is the appeal to great men in the sonnet to Milton and the sonnet beginning

Great men have been among us.

Presentiments and many passages in *The Prelude* reveal the sources of the leader's power.[8] As early as 1802 the leader and these sources are brought together in the sonnet to *The King of Sweden.*

> . . . that great king: . . .
> Who, taking counsel of unbending Truth,
> By one example hath set forth to all
> How they with dignity may stand.[9]

Of the education of 'The Governor' he wrote in 1801 with a half-conscious vision of his fullest theory,

> 'Tis not in battles that from youth we train
> The Governor who must be wise and good,
> And temper with the sternness of the brain
> Thoughts motherly, and meek as womanhood.
> Wisdom doth live with children round her knees:
> Books, leisure, perfect freedom, and the talk
> Man holds with week-day man in the hourly walk
> Of the mind's business: these are the degrees
> By which true Sway doth mount; this is the stalk
> True Power doth grow on; and her rights are these (304).

Nearly forty years later (1838) he described for the last forceful time the quality and character of heroic action.

[8] E. g. *Prelude*, v, ll. 39-41; xiv, ll. 188-192.
[9] *Poetical Works*, ed. Hutchinson, 305.

Blest Statesman He, whose Mind's unselfish will
Leaves him at ease among grand thoughts: whose eye
Sees that, apart from magnanimity,
Wisdom exists not; nor the humbler skill
Of Prudence, disentangling good and ill
With patient care. What tho' assaults run high
They daunt not him who holds his ministry,
Resolute, at all hazards, to fulfill
Its duties; . . . (514)

And just half way between, in the *Ecclesiastical Sonnets*:

Calm as an under-current, strong to draw
Millions of waves unto itself, . . . the spirit of Nassau
Swerves not, . . . from its end
Swerves not—diverted by a casual law.
Had moral action e'er a nobler scope?
The Hero comes to liberate, not defy (442).

But no one would be foolish enough to base a judgment on a few instances such as these from a poet who was sometimes capable of entertaining ideas not in perfect harmony with each other. Fortunately there spring to the mind of any reader of Wordsworth's poetry numberless occasions on which this theory of his manifests itself. One recalls that Rob Roy

. . . was wise as brave;
As wise in thought as bold in deed
For in the principle of things
He sought his moral creed (291).

Dion and especially its conclusion stir in one's memory. There are among many other sonnets, *Seathwaite Chapel* and *London*, 1802. Indeed, this theory lights up—nothing

else could do so—the tribute to Schill, to Hofer, to Palafox, the lines written in expectation of the *Death of Mr. Fox*, the portrait of Burke, and the passage in *The Prelude* (xiv, 112) beginning

> Such minds are truly from the Deity.

Many, many poems on political and ecclesiastical subjects, notably sonnets, are newly significant in this light. The sonnet *To Toussaint L'Ouverture* becomes at once something deeper, and something more precise, than a semi-pantheistic, semi-mystic tribute to an individual. And, with all its admirable economy of policy, the *Character of a Happy Warrior* rests upon the law of reason. He

> Through the heat of conflict, keeps the law
> In calmness made, and sees what he foresaw.

Over all such instances hangs the capital instance of Wordsworth's own conception of himself. For Wordsworth conceived himself as forming in the mould of the ideal leader. There is *The Prelude* to prove it, *The Recluse*, and certain of the sonnets and letters. In all these we have not only the leader, but the source and the quality of his leadership.

Finally, we have to assure ourselves that this theory and practice of Wordsworth is in thorough agreement with the fundamentals of his general philosophy. The latter 'depends upon the asserted identity between our childish instincts and our enlightened reason.'[10] Sir Leslie Stephen, whom I have just quoted, elaborates thus: 'Our vague instincts are consolidated into reason by meditation, sym-

[10] Stephen, *Hours in a Library*, iii, 146-7.

pathy with our fellows, communion with nature, and a constant devotion to "high endeavors" ' (166). Sir Leslie's categories are not strictly ours, but they so nearly coincide that no one would find contradiction in them. But should we not choose to appeal to such authority, we may make our own affirmation. The terms of the great man theory are the essential terms of all Wordsworth's teaching, as indeed the quotations from *The Prelude* and *The Recluse* prove: Reason, Nature, Unbending Truth, Virtue, Duty (resolute obedience to the vision seen). And, whether Wordsworth would have been pleased at the thought or not, a leadership theory is a more logical development of his general philosophy than a maundering sureness that every dalesman within thirty miles of Rydal Water was sensitive to the high things whose dwelling is the light of setting suns—and more consistent with the neighborly facts.

COLERIDGE: THE STATESMAN

Wordsworth was a thinker; he was not a philosopher. Coleridge, especially in his later years, made pretensions to systematic philosophy. We may therefore expect that if any conception of a statesman or leader appears in his 'system' it will be soundly based and well correlated. But the matter is even more difficult than Professor Shedd implies when he remarks 'that the philosophy of Coleridge must be gathered from his writings rather than quoted from them.' And the investigator and his reader must be patient with lore that is in itself abstruse and in its statement tough. More than any thinking of its kind, that of Coleridge lacks crispness.

Although Dowden[11] and Brandl[12] lend their authority to such a view, no one who has read the documents in the case will for an instant take as exact historic truth those asseverations of Coleridge that he never was a Jacobin, nor believed *vox populi* to be *vox Dei*.[13] Mr. Walter Graham has finally cleared the matter up.[14] There is one bit of evidence which appears, however, to have been missed. Since it not only confirms the view that Coleridge was once very radical in his doctrine but also shows that he himself was aware that he had been, I note it here. In the now rare pamphlet *The Plot Discovered* (Bristol, 1795), it is written that the English government is rescued from 'Despotism' only by 'the right of petition' through which the 'deep and awful thunder' of popular will becomes the 'voice of God . . . which his vice-regents must hear' (44). Thus once—if for only once—Coleridge did say 'the *vox populi* was of course the *vox Dei*,' and unquestionably he was stating his conviction.

Similarly we may proceed with regard to his famous sentence first printed in 1809 in the eleventh number of *The Friend*, and reprinted, and remade, and repeated at various times in various places: 'I was never myself, at any period of my life, a convert to the Jacobinical system.' The The Jacobinical system here understood is doubtless that of the definition of 1818: 'the essence of Jacobinism, as far as Jacobinism is anything but a term of abuse, or has any meaning of its own distinct from democracy and sedition'

[11] *Studies in Literature*, 12. [12] *Life of Coleridge*, 226.
[13] *Complete Works*, iii, 282; ii, 203, 296; and iv, 393.
[14] *Publications of the Modern Language Association*, March 1921, 61-64.

(ii, 165-6) consists in the 'confusion of the immorality'[15] of the 'system of Hobbes' (which 'denies all truth and distinct meaning to the words, right and duty') 'with the misapplied principles of . . . government laid exclusively in the pure reason' (ii, 154).

When Coleridge found himself at work on the 1818 rifaciamento of *The Friend* he felt the necessity of going back to earlier evidence to prove that he had never been a Jacobin. Accordingly he reprinted the first of the *Conciones ad Populum*, delivered at Bristol, February 1795, as Essay XVI, Section I, saying: 'The only omissions regard the names of persons' (ii, 296). No one has, so far as I can find, pointed out—or even known—that in addition to names he omitted in the reprint the following paragraph, the fourth from the end of the address. He is speaking to the rich and powerful:

Renounce then the proud pretensions of democracy; do not profess tenets which it is impossible for you surrounded by all the symbols of superiority to wish realized. But you plead, it seems, for equalization of 'Rights,' not of Condition. O Mockery! All that can delight the poor man's sense or strengthen his understanding, you preclude; yet with generous condescension you would bid him exclaim 'Liberty and Equality'! because, forsooth, he should possess the same Right to an Hovel which you claim to a Palace. This the laws have already given. And what more do you promise?

Beyond question it is upon this paragraph that his critics based their judgment that 'this very address' was 'proof of my former Jacobinism.' It is perfectly clear that to

[15] All reprints—1854, 1884, etc. read 'immortality'; 1818 reads as here.

Coleridge the right of every man to an equal palace had been laid in the pure reason which he early and late regarded as equally resident in all men. In the 1818 *Friend*, as we shall see, he essentially qualified the force of this idea, without changing it, by setting up another idea beside it. Meanwhile the cancelled paragraph, as Coleridge himself saw — or why the excision?—committed its author to a palace for every man and independence for every man because every man is possessed equally of the power of pure reason.

It is no special purpose of mine to prove that Coleridge stacked the cards. Nor have I the intention to confront his fame, as some of his critics have the comic air of doing, with these Medusa contradictions. In themselves, the earlier doctrines are not soluble in the later. So much is clear. We must examine the evidence to see what new idea harmonized these oppositions for him, and, before that, what influence of idea or of event moved him from one postion to the other.

The psychology of the situation is simple. Coleridge, like others who once held faith in the wisdom and righteousness of the proletariat, found himself convinced by the French events that the theories upon which he had explained them were not true. He inherited at this juncture the best of Burke's conservatism. The people were not compact of vision and the power to initiate achieving action. The Voice of God was, at the least, not always in residence in the people. The more unquestioning heard the voice, no longer audible in that quarter, speak from the

man of destiny. Men of thought, like Wordsworth and Coleridge, with unerring logic brought themselves to a new, founded position. What the new position was, exactly, and how, in the case of Coleridge, it was arrived at, is clear from the following passage. On April 29, 1832, to whatever auditors were at Highgate, Coleridge said:

I never said that the *vox populi* was of course the *vox Dei*. It may be; but it may be, and with equal probability, *a priori*, *vox Diaboli*. That the voice of ten millions of men calling for the same thing is a spirit, I believe; but whether that be a spirit of heaven or hell, I can only know by trying the thing called for by the prescript of reason and God's will (vi, 393).

The new doctrine, then, does not desert for good and all the old, that *vox populi* is *vox Dei*. But it subjects the popular will to the test of reason and divine intent in the mind of one who has knowledge of the high and holy prescript. In other words, the new idea of leader is introduced, a leader with power to affirm or forbid.

Coleridge indeed pretty freely recognizes that there are men of a common order and men of genius (vi, 318, 380, 415). He without question sets aside as superior the gifts and services of 'the Cranmers, Hampdens, and Sidneys' (ii, 68). And he recognizes with some explicitness, though not with rigorous consistency, the three orders of mental capacity that Machiavelli designates. Twice (i, 427; ii, 114) —once in *The Statesman's Manual*, once in *The Friend*— he quotes:

Sono di tre generazioni cervelli: l'uno intende per se; l'altro intende quanto da altri gli è mostro; e il terzo intende nè per se stesso nè dimostrazione di altri.

He translates:

There are brains of three races. The one understands of itself; the other understands as much as is shown it by others; the third neither understands of itself, nor what is shown it by others (i, 427).

In *The Friend* he introduces the quotation with 'Machiavelli has well observed.' The first order is genius. Its capacity to 'understand of itself' is a gloss on the cryptic 'the greatest and best of men is but an aphorism' (i, 129). Genius is 'the action of reason and imagination' (vi, 319). This action affords

one of the most characteristic and infallible criteria of the different ranks of men's intellects, . . . the instinctive habit which all superior minds have of endeavouring to bring, and of never resting till they have brought into unity the scattered facts which occur in conversation, or in the statements of men of business (vi, 380).

The second order—the taught—finds itself illustrated by those persons, for example, who in philosophy are incapable of pushing back the frontiers in speculative science but to whom the charted science need not therefore be a *terra incognita* (i, 428; iii, 251). The distinction between these two orders is made perfectly clear by the phrase 'the few men of genius among the learned class' (iii, 257). The nature of the third class, the not-learned, is set beyond doubt by a passage in *The Statesman's Manual:* 'To the immense majority of men, even in civilized countries, speculative philosophy has ever been, and must ever remain, a *terra incognita*' (i, 428). The whole matter under consideration is neatly touched off by the 'profaccia with

a desponding sigh' in *The Statesman's Manual:* 'From a popular philosophy and a philosophic populace, Good Sense deliver us!' (i, 442).

The basis of Coleridge's idea of a great man lies in that 'contradistinction of the understanding from reason—for which,' he writes in 1825, 'during twenty years I have been contending' (i, 257).

> By the 'understanding,' I mean the faculty of thinking and forming judgments on the notices furnished by the sense, according to certain rules existing in itself, which rules constitute its distinct nature. By the pure 'reason,' I mean the power by which we become possessed of principles [ii, 164]. The reason itself is the same in all men, yet the means of exercising it, and the materials,—that is, the facts and conceptions—on which it is exercised, being possessed in very different degrees by different persons, the practical result is, of course, equally different (ii, 148).

The greatness of the mind, then, depends upon its bringing into unity with themselves and all things *all* the facts and conceptions, that is, upon the power to make the understanding serve the reason and the reason subserve the understanding. It is the function of reason in this reference 'to comprehend,' that is, to subordinate the notions of sense and the rules of the understanding's experience to absolute principles or necessary laws. Thus the reason 'comprehends' all in the unity (ii, 146).

If, now, we bring together the elements so far set forth we find that the laws or principles of reason and the regulations of prudence or understanding can make contact only in the unifying minds of superior men. This indeed, in

practice, is Coleridge's conception. Pure reason in its fullness is Almighty Wisdom. 'The laws of the Hebrew Commonwealth,' for example, 'which flowed from the pure reason, remain and are immutable.' From the statesman 'we have a right to expect a sober and meditative accommodation to our own times and country of those important truths declared in the inspired writings *for a thousand generations* (i, 423). Here then is that 'prescript of reason' by which the leader, Wordsworth, Coleridge, or another, shall try the *vox populi* to discover whether it be *vox Dei* or *vox diaboli*.

The development of Coleridge's conservatism, which is nothing more than the subjection of the vague urges of a populace or mob to the control of a seer, may be traced at the critical moment in his so-called political poems. In *The Destruction of the Bastille* and the lines *To a Young Lady*, the approval is for the freeing of Freedom—nothing more. Of the twelve sonnets in the Juvenile Poems, several exalt individual genius, one or two imply the value of the great leader to the cause of liberty, and the sonnet to Priestley looks with sharp disapproval upon the voice of the people and its results in the special case:

> Though roused by that dark Vizir Riot rude
> Have driven our Priestley o'er the ocean swell.

In *Religious Musings*, in which the French Revolution is heralded as the beginning of that great upheaval of the innumerable tribes of the oppressed, not only are these tribes roused by 'eloquent men' 'stung to rage with pity',

but 'the mad careering of the storm' thus set going is tamed by 'Philosophers and Bards,'

> Conscious of their high dignities from God,
> \- - - - - - - -
> Enamored with the charms of order.

and hating 'the unseemly disproportion' (vii, 77). These, who realize the charms of order, are 'Coadjutors of God,' 'the elect of Heaven,' and their function is to dart their strong eye through the deeds of men and to adore steadfastly, yet humbly, Nature's essence, mind, and energy—in short what Coleridge later designated 'Reason.'

The Destiny of Nations carries us forward by a definition of freedom.

> For what is freedom but the unfettered use
> Of all the powers which God for use had given?
> But chiefly this, him first, him last to view
> Through meaner powers and secondary things
> Effulgent, as through clouds that veil his blaze.
> (vii, 83)

It is not the possession of those

> who deem themselves most free
> When they within this gross and visible sphere
> Chain down the winged thought, scoffing ascent,
> Proud in their meanness (vii, 83).

The Ode to the Departing Year adds nothing. *France, an Ode* is the record of the crisis in the poet's soul, which followed France's assault upon Switzerland. So after all, runs the burden of the conclusion, the great upheaval was the vain rebellion of 'the Sensual and the Dark,' was not informed by the voice of God. *Fears in Solitude*, written in

April of 1798, is a call to Britons. The lines have fed on bitter disappointment, but they confirm the *Ode.*

When we assemble the evidence of the poems, we find, then, that freedom of man, liberty, is through them all the continued object of the poet's devotion. Nevertheless, from the first he does not exclude freedom secured to men by a Kosciusko, let us say; specifically in his most elaborate statement he not only allows to the 'Coadjutors of God' the initiation and propulsion of freedom's ideals but also assigns to these 'Philosophers and Bards' the task of molding to perfect forms the 'confusions' of 'the outrageous mass.' Finally—and with intense significance—his own reversal of judgment on the French upheaval is based soundly on his devotion to freedom and illustrates, in his own person, the Philosopher and Bard trying events by the prescript of reason and concluding that *vox populi* is in the instance before him *vox diaboli.*

In the light of the same doctrine, Coleridge's conception of the *jus divinum* of kings becomes an intelligible matter. For the 'direct relation of the state and its magistracy to the Supreme Being' (i, 429) is merely the fact of the unity of reason and the access to reason of all men fit to rule. And it is to be remembered that, though 'the reason hath faith in itself in its own revelations,' by his acts a man of power may write himself down a demagogue (vi, 170-1), and no leader. Camiola seems almost to have had her eye on this teaching when she addressed the King of Sicily:

> Since, when you are unjust, the deity
> Which you may challenge as a king, parts from you.

In the same light, too, much of the material interpolated in *The Friend* for entertainment of the reader and refreshment after the philosophical disquisitions, becomes significant, taking on for the reader the associative values that it bore in the author's mind. For example: in Essays XI and XII of the *General Introduction* Napoleon is finally ruled out of the court as 'the mimic and caricaturist of Charlemagne' (ii, 79 ff). Charlemagne more or less is accepted at Alcuin's evaluation as the embodiment of the Platonic philosopher become king. Napoleon is no philosopher and no king because he takes to mimicing his predecèssor's acts instead of accommodating anew to the circumstances the principles and prescript of Reason. Likely enough, had Coleridge known Eginhard's document he would have ruled out Charlemagne for his attempt at an *Augustus Redivivus*. Nevertheless, though this throws a question at the doctrine itself, the choice and the treatment of material are illuminated.

Of Coleridge's praise of Sir Alexander Ball nothing more need be said than that, if his perspectives were crooked and his judgment wrong, the exaltation of the little great man was orthodox, well within the teaching. In his recondite Royal Society *Essay on the Prometheus of Aeschylus*,[16] even one in the porch of the temple can see the god out of the machine: for Aeschylus, the Eleusinian, has concealed in his tragedy and poetry (so says S. T. C.) a *philosophema*. The mythos of the colossal hero is 'the generation of the νοῦς or pure reason in man!' (iv, 351). Upon no other

[16] Delivered May 18, 1825.

theory can one explain Coleridge's explanation than upon his obsession with the doctrine of leader as already set forth. This Coleridge who uplifted Sir Alexander Ball and degraded the *Prometheus Bound* is, one reminds oneself, the Coleridge who protected his leader against quack competition by telling the Higher Classes of Society how to recognize the demagogue with eleven tests (vi, 170-71), at least four of which we might here turn upon the analyst himself.

For Coleridge regarded himself as leader, beyond question. It was the basic inconsistency of his earliest addresses that they were '*Conciones ad Populum*'—the discourses of a leader. In *Lines on a Friend*, written in his youth, he says:

> To me hath Heaven with bounteous hand assigned
> Energic Reason and a shaping mind,
> The daring ken of Truth, the Patriot's part. (vii, 56)

And long before Coleridge sat upon Highgate Hill mumbling to his disciples, he was leading statesmen to the fountain of political truth and philosophers to the source of Reason. The Highgate *Table Talk* is proof for the latter end; just as the tone of the addresses is for the first—not to speak of his judgment after the Swiss episode, that the *vox populi* in France was not *vox Dei*, but *vox diaboli*. The serious concern over his success and failure with the distinction of Reason and Understanding is evidence in the interval. The best of all evidence, however, if we hold in mind the relation of the great man to the learned classes, is the correction in Coleridge's own hand upon the title page

of a copy of the *Statesman's Manual*.[17] After the words *A Lay Sermon Addressed to the Higher Classes of Society*, the author has added *but more particularly to the Learned*.* The asterisk guides to the following footnote: 'So it was ordered to be printed, and so, I believe, it was advertised.' Furthermore, by merely measuring against his doctrine Coleridge's method of performance—with him so conscious a process!—it would be clear to a child that he conceived himself with some wistfulness but with some complacency, also, as leader.

It still remains to point out that the rights and duties of the early Jacobinical faith, recognized by Rousseau as one of the problems of government, maintain their place in the new scheme. For since Reason is resident in all men, every man may unite himself to the form of society planned and perfected by the leader in accordance with the prescripts of Reason, and yet obey himself only and remain as free as before. Thus for Coleridge as for Wordsworth the leader is the interpreter of the will of all.

SHELLEY: THE LIBERATOR

The youth of Byron and Shelley, coming twenty years after that of Wordsworth and Coleridge, was subjected to different influences. And for all their democratic zeal they were strongly taken with the glamor of the Man of Destiny. For them consequently the great man is a more salient feature. Shelley comes chronologically last in this group, but psychologically he precedes Byron.

[17] In the Widener Collection, Harvard College Library.

At the outset we must remind ourselves that the universe struck Shelley as a myth-maker and poet, and it struck him as what may be termed a humanitarian or sociological philosopher. The world that struck the poet in these distinct ways is in the large a sociological laboratory. In it certain facts like winds, and dropping leaves, and sweet voices that fall silent are quite outside sociological generalizations. For them he is a lyre. All other facts he forced to submit to the analysis of his reason. He discovered a formula and, like all his kind, he thought he had found the philosopher's stone.

This formula presents the human situation in terms of good and evil. Shelley is a perfectibilist. Love is the sole law which should govern the moral world.[18] Under its sway all men will be good. The misery of men is not grounded in nature or in the tyranny of the Maker, but is caused by 'the absence of reason.'[19] Who shall introduce reason? The leader. How? 'By an unadorned display of moral truth.'[20] So shall men be liberated. Shelley's own practical devices as an eager reformer seem small when compared with the cosmic convulsions of the *Prometheus*. Yet in spite of the distance measured between the real world and the ideal, Percy Bysshe Shelley and Laon and Prometheus are one type. They are, in Shelley's mind, the enemies and victims of tyrants, the idealized benefactors of men who for their efforts to bring men happiness suffer oppression.

Slave, tyrant, rebel—these constitute the Shelleyan triangle:

[13] *The Complete Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, 37.
[19] Notes to *Queen Mab*.
[20] Irish Pamphlet, written with this conviction.

The slave and the tyrant are twin-born foes.[21]

When Liberty, inducted always by rebelling men, comes,

. . . tyrants and slaves are like Shadows of night
In the van of the morning light (616).

The rebel may be the lowliest of men; his name may be legion. Hear the trumpeting last line of *The Mask of Anarchy:*

Ye are many—they are few.

But when, as in *The Revolt of Islam*, an army of rebellious patriots moves upon the oppressors, they meet disaster. A leader is needed: his mere name—Laon— turns defeat to victory and he is proclaimed

The friend and the preserver of the free! (i, 1875)

Since the aim of the leader here is to create a perfectibilist world, it follows that in the ideal anarchy of universal intelligence he becomes useless. He is therefore a temporary phenomenon. Shelley takes casual note of this fact in the sonnet on *Political Greatness*. Political greatness creates a world in which it is not needed. This is practically illustrated in the conclusions of Shelley's plots—and explains these. Upon what he himself would have spent his humanitarian energy in such a world, there is no hint.

There are three longer works which deal with social questions: *Queen Mab*, *The Revolt of Islam*, and *Prometheus Unbound*. In the first, a juvenile piece entirely under the influence of Godwin, there is no sign as to how the ultimate millenium is to be achieved, though there is a vision of it. In the second a fleeting glimpse of the millenium is attained.

[21] *Poetical Works*, 1914, 571.

In the third good begins its eternal reign. This progress in achievement moves on, *pari passu*, with the potency of the liberator. In *Queen Mab* the future does not become the present. Two conditions are set side by side, without any hint as to how the change is to come. It may be that there is no change because there is no leader; it may be that there is no leader because the change is not depicted. *The Revolt of Islam* does not arrive at the end Shelley dreamed because the forces of right have no adequate protagonist. Or, once more, it may be that the leader fails Shelley because he does not see quite what the leader is to achieve. But the humanitarian ideal in relation to the shameful present is taking a clear shape; and step by step the need of a chief mover is becoming clear. In *Prometheus Unbound* we come near to a final position. But when at length the Spirit of the Hours blows upon 'the fairest shell of Ocean,' and the prophecy of 'one brotherhood' is achieved, the liberator—as liberator—being useless drops out of sight. Act IV has no place for Prometheus, unless we were to suffer the bathos of hearing him exalt his own good and perfect work.

Shelley's conception of a leader is the reformer's, not the philosopher's. He is concerned with an instrument for achieving freedom,—religious, political, economic. The sources of a leader's gift, the nature of it, how specifically the leader is to enlighten the world, these are not his affairs. Great men are excellent in proportion as they defy and strike down tyranny. He illustrates his theory in his own practice and in that of his heroes. Sometimes his writings

are the weapons of his assault, sometimes they depict the assault upon tyranny of other real or imagined people. Of the illustrations as of the theory it must be said that they are at home in the mind of an indignant visionary, somewhat obsessed by a vulgar love of confrontations in which the high are cast down and the lowly raised up. (*Ozymandias* has a much more precise motive than sadness at the shortness of man's works.) The whole conception has not the completeness of mind that looks before and after and sees the great world in the little. But it was a current conception for Carlyle, and it has been, with what warrant is evident, been called by Professor Cestre the source of the Hero.

BYRON: THE REBEL

Byron had, like Shelley, an unconquerable social interest. It comes out everywhere in what is enduring in his writings. It comes out not least of all in the use he makes of his sense of beauty. He, himself, and his heroes, when they are most isolated from humanity, are most bound to it by ties as deep as the human heart. Their division is negative, forced upon them by society, not positive, the result of desire. Rebellion against the world and the world's law is their course. They seek life unconditioned. So to him—and to his heroes—nature is the consoler, and not infrequently leads through consolation to a new, ideal union with the world that is to be.

> The mountains look on Marathon—
> And Marathon looks on the sea;

And musing there an hour alone,
I dream'd that Greece might still be free.[22]

But also as frequently the consolation breeds a savage pity for self and self's trials. There result two Byrons—and two types of hero in the poems.

It is the fault of certain critics that they do not make this distinction and that, in one phrase or another, they depict Byron dragging the pageant of his bleeding heart through Europe. They interpret Missolonghi as a pose. They can not have read the letters. A noble desire to espouse the cause of those who seek any temporal improvement runs through them. In the 'war of men with monarchs,' he would give his blood.[23] He speaks almost with yearning of the Italian republic (v, 155). Yet he knows that the dream can be made real only by leaders. 'If the Neapolitans have but a single Massaniello amongst them, they will beat the bloody butchers of the crown and sabre' (v, 188-9).

Let one living head,
But one arise,—we come, we come.

As the hope of such leadership waned, he thought—and spoke—of taking a part in the business himself (vi, 112; v, 20; vi, 257). His part would have been a leading one whether for good or for bad, as that last Greek adventure was to prove.

For I will teach, if possible, the stones
To rise against earth's tyrants. (*Don Juan*, VIII, *cxxxv*)

The same aspect of Byron shows through—with a bit of flourish, one feels—in the comment on the brilliant nar-

[22] Cf. also Childe Harold, Canto IV, clxxviii. [23] *Letters*, v, 383, 403.

rative of his taking in the murdered military commander. 'I shall,' he writes, 'never be deterred from a duty of humanity by all the assassins of Italy, and that is a wide word' (Letters, v, 136). Of one Byron 'a duty of humanity' was the watchword. To the last he dreamed of leading men to a less conditioned life. The other uttered his sobs of personal anguish and his bitter-sweet 'gypsy laughter from the bushes,' for he saw for himself no hope of a life less cabined.

The famous dictum, then, that Byron is the hero of all his poems is misleading. For if there are two Byrons there may be two kinds of hero. So it proves.

There are those whom we may represent by Lara. Lara moves as Byron would have, among the amazing properties of the Gothic romance. Clearly this hero is not bent on saving his kind. He differs seriously from Byron only in his tight-lipped habit. He is almost inarticulate, which the real Byron was never for one moment in all his life. But the 'scattered dints of many a scar' (*Lara*, II, xxiii) and the accumulated weight of the narrator's phrases imply that he sought once to find for himself through physical protest a free environment. He could not, and his cheek never changed 'from its callow gloom' (*Lara*, II, ii). At the last 'a calm disdain . . . rose to reconcile him with his fate' (Lara, II, xviii). Childe Harold, 'the world's tired denizen,' expresses the philosophy upon which Lara acts.

> Existence may be borne, and the deep root
> Of life and sufferance make its firm abode
> The bare and desolated bosoms: mute

The camel labors with the heaviest load,
And the wolf dies in silence,—not bestowed
In vain should such example be; if they
Things of ignoble or of savage mood,
Endure and shrink not, we of nobler clay
May temper it to bear,—it is but for a day (IV, *xxi*).

The situation which prompts this reaction is simple:

First Freedom, and then Glory—when that fails
Wealth, vice, corruption,—barbarism at last. (IV, *cviii*)

Harold, Lara, and their like dream of the glorious Freedom which in their time has departed from the earth; for a day, perhaps, they struggle to bring it back. But struggle decays into protest, protest into grim despondence. The cause of this declension is that the hero thinks of and yearns for his right of humanity instead of concerning himself with his duty of humanity.

Byron, however, could interpret rights in terms of duties. His preoccupation with Prometheus is significant. He was loud in his praise of Shelley's drama. When the Edinburgh Review spoke of the similarity of *Manfred* and the *Prometheus* of Aeschylus, he wrote: 'The *Prometheus*, if not exactly in my plan has always been so much in my head, that I can easily conceive its influence over all or anything that I have written' (Letters, iv, 174-5). And his own Prometheus in the poem written at the villa Diodati in 1816 (two years before Shelley began his drama), suffers not because he sought for himself an unconditioned life, but for the crime of service to men.

Thy Godlike crime was to be kind,
To render with thy precepts less
The sum of human wretchedness,
And strengthen man with his own mind.

Yet Prometheus is not the perfect type of those of Byron's heroes who are more than egotists. Shelley once pointed out that 'The only imaginary being resembling in any degree Prometheus, is Satan,'[24] and Carlyle asserted that 'Satan also is Byron's grand exemplar; the hero of his poetry, and the model apparently for his conduct.'[25] Shelley, furthermore, carefully marked the distinction between the two figures. They both are characterized by 'courage and majesty, and firm and patient opposition to omnipotent force'; Prometheus is 'exempt from the taints of ambition, envy, revenge, and a desire for personal aggrandisement,' and Satan is not.[26] The difference is that Prometheus is actually a whole being, all the contradictory elements brought into a reverend unity, and that in Satan the contradictions are still contradictory. This, it seems to me, must be what Carlyle had in mind when he said Satan is Byron's grand exemplar. For in his journal for December 3, 1826, he wrote: 'when [Byron] died he was only a *Kraftmann* (Powerman as the Germans call them). Had he lived he would have been a poet.'[27] And in 1827, he wrote of 'these Powermen'; 'Their head moral virtue was pride; their beau ideal of manhood was some transcript of Milton's Devil.'[28] Manfred and Cain, for examples, have indeed a quality rather Satanic than Promethean. And through them there comes into the hero-tradition the influence not only of Satan, but of all those villains who usurp the interest that the hero should hold. Dryden

[24] Preface to *Prometheus Unbound.*
[25] *Essays*, i, 238.
[26] Preface to *Prometheus Unbound.*
[27] Froude, *First Forty Years*, i, 216.
[28] *Essays*, i, 52.

pointed out the fact for *Paradise Lost;* from Marlowe to Massinger the instances abound. Nor should the influence of the *Sturm und Drang* with its *Kraftsmänner* go unrecognized. Now, though Byron's noblest heroes may be said to oppose the moral law for the purpose, in part, of advancing their own interests, their opposition is not grounded in a wilful desire to secure their own rights but in a courageous and majestic ambition to secure the rights of others against an omnipotent force. In this way duty enters into the formula.

In Cain, the stimulus is Lucifer himself. It is possible, even, to rationalize Lucifer as the rebellious thought of man.

CAIN: How!
You know my thoughts?
LUCIFER: They are the thoughts of all
Worthy of thought;—'tis your immortal part
Which speaks within you. (Act I, Scene 1)

Cain's complaint against Adam and Eve is that they served themselves with no eye, no love for their offspring. Their rights, not their duties guided them. He speaks always in terms not of himself alone but of his children. 'My little Enoch! and his lisping sister!' He is in grief for the hard lot of 'me and mine'—

all the few that are,
And all the unnumber'd and innumerable
Multitudes, millions, myriads, which may be
To inherit agonies accumulated
By ages! (Act I, Scene 1).

Even the beasts of the fields he would redeem from the curse of the fruit.

But animals—
Did they too, eat of it, that they must die?
(Act II, Scene 2)

Blaming all that is, he falls by an error of judgment into headlong opposition to the organized life of his time and its Organizer. There is a marvelous accord between Lucifer—

And world by world
And star by star, and universe by universe,
Shall tremble in the balance, till the great
Conflict shall cease, if ever it shall cease
Which it ne'er shall, till he or I be quenched!
(Act II, Scene 2)

and Cain, who tells Abel he means

to cast down yon vile flatt'rer of the clouds,
The smoky harbinger of thy dull prayers.
(Act III, Scene 1)

Yet finally, in spite of all that is courageous and high-minded in his opposition, the taint of envy and revenge leads him to confuse service with personal gratification, and he who desired to be free of death and to free men, leads Death into the World for the first time. Cain had attained no inner unity, although the 'duty of humanity' may be said to have been emerging into a central place.

Between those early heroes, like Conrad and Lara (1814), and Cain (1821), there is a transition group represented by Manfred (1817). Manfred seeks oblivion, self-oblivion. He has found that

> The tree of knowledge is not that of life.
> (Act I, Scene 1)

In him courage, firmness, and patience have gathered power over men and over material and over spirits. Yet all's but naught. His taint was ambition, for though he can say

> I have done men good,
> And I have met with good even among men.
> (Act I, Scene 1)

he is not content. 'This availed not.' He could not define life in duties, he asserted and exercised the arrogant rights of a satanic spirit. In the Hall of Arimanes, a spirit of evil admires him:

> Yet, see, he mastereth himself, and makes
> His torture tributary to his will.
> Had he been one of us, he would have made
> An awful spirit. (Act II, Scene 4)

Manfred had never that desire to free men which animated Cain, and he never came to humiliate himself as did Cain. As a character he looks forward toward the condition in which service is a goal and humility a reaction upon arrogance. But he is none the less still very much like those who protested vigorously against their world. He does not fall into mere vociferous despondency, as they, however, —until he has conquered. Then he is overwhelmed by the desperate boredom of omniscience, without love. As a fact, it seems to me, Manfred can not accurately be called Promethean; he can not even be called Satanic. He typifies the degree of rebellion beyond the vague sullenness of Lara but this side the intelligent opposition of Cain and Lucifer. Such is the Byronic Rebel.

THE EPIC TEMPER OF CARLYLE'S MIND

These borrowings and influences outline the main sources of Carlyle's idea. In tracing the growth of the idea (Chapter iii) I strove to make clear the way in which the elements, thus derived, coalesced. Yet even this general, undocumented method of approaching the problem gives the effect of a mechanical process. As a fact, the author's work is not that of a joiner; it is an alchemist's work. The magic alembic I name Carlyle's epic mind. For his mind, marked by so many strong, almost contradictory traits, secured its integrity by virtue of a certain epic quality. 'With the gift of song Carlyle would have been the greatest of epic poets since Homer.' Lowell hits here the essence of his genius. To depict the history of a great man, representing and leading (if possible) a fairly homogeneous folk, moving through exalted adventures under some divine guidance, or even interference—this is the epic poet's task and to it the epic mind turns as to its own. Not that it excludes the lowly. Homer had his dog, old and full of fleas, no less than his Achilles and his Hector. And Carlyle has a great open heart for 'a poor woman' crushed down with rents and quit-rents and for Dr. Johnson's 'poor girl of the street.' The daily lives of all men are vital to the epic writer: the Greek embosses them for ever on a shield; the Englishman brings them on to his page directly, as when Cromwell dismissed the Rump Parliament and 'they all vanished; flooding gloomily clamorously out, to their ulterior businesses, and respective places of abode.' The hero of the epic stands there telling Sir Henry Vane a

plain truth—yet Carlyle has an intense perception of all these others and their wives and door flunkeys and cooks to whom, above and below stairs, the whole amazing affair will be detailed. And he perceives them not collectively, but as individuals. So he is not a mere historian, nor a vivid generalizer. Nor is he an essayist or lyric artist, for it is not himself he would set forth but another. And again, since he cannot keep himself out of it, he is no dramatist.

This epic artist of the nineteenth century found great men and to spare, for it was long since any human being had been made the hero of a fitting history. Great adventures, too, were not lacking—far otherwise. But no great epic can be made without the presence of some supernal power, and gods will no longer pass in any work more serious or more august than *The Rape of the Lock*. If the gods will not do, some new conception of Divinity must be found. The Idealistic Universe affords precisely the needed thing. In general Juno and Aphrodite appear only to the elect, to those in some sense the great figures, the demigods. The Divine Idea, God, whatever the heart of the world is named, is comprehensible only by one specially gifted. Divine guidance brings Cromwell through as well as Achilles.

In this sense, then, I may say Carlyle's epic-mindedness is the deep well out of which all these borrowings emerge in a new conception. He does not of course use his conception only when he writes history. As we saw in Chapter iii, it is the basis of his theory of criticism, of conduct, and of whatever else concerning which he thought necessary

to have a theory. But into it, whatever the shape it may appear in, went all the array of materials I have been setting forth. There are elements borrowed whole, as from Fichte, sometimes with expressed indebtedness, sometimes with unexpressed and probably unrecognized indebtedness. And there are subtle influences, everywhere in the air, that in the end aided in fixing the Great Man. These may be precipitated in the work of the representative writers of the age in which Carlyle came to the fullness of his thought. The analyses of these make it clear beyond a doubt that Carlyle was not the originator, but rather the popularizer of the theory of leadership. To popularize he sharpened the focus, even exaggerated the emphasis, in a deep sense, too, made the concept his own. But to the conception, as it came from all sources, he added almost nothing essential, unless it be the figure of the 'seeing eye.' For even the distinction between Reason and Understanding is to be found in Coleridge.

CHAPTER VI

SOME CRITICISMS OF CARLYLE'S DOCTRINE

The influence of the Hero idea on Carlyle's life and writings can not be described without first taking a critical view of the doctrine. This has been attempted before, by distinguished men and on noteworthy occasions.

Criticism manifests itself in many ways. A reaction to doctrine is a criticism of it. Fault-finding, whole-hearted and perhaps unanalytical approval, incidental allusion from exposition of a related idea, reconstruction of the doctrine on new lines—in these and in other guises criticism appears. All criticism should of course be based upon the unquestionable facts of the case. When, as often happens, it is not, the problem of the critic's critic is complicated. Take for example, Professor Babbitt's reaction to the Hero. Failing to see that Carlyle sublimated and ennobled whatever of the original genius flowed into his conception from the poets and philosophers, he thinks of his own teaching as a corrective of Carlyle's special idea, whereas it is actually corrective of an idea which Carlyle was himself striving, in a different spirit but with very nearly the same instrument, to correct. A similar complication arises when Traill cavils and censures or when Garnett approves, for with their eyes on larger matters they have not snatched the heart out of this mystery.

Each critic, moreover, proceeds under the aegis of the general conceptions which dominate his time or cult.

The simplest method for us is to follow as closely as possible the chronological order. The first significant criticism of the theory of the great man as Carlyle re-presented it is Mazzini's. Its burden is a democratic cry. Mazzini's chief point upon this head is that Carlyle sees in the world no object but 'God and the Individual.'[1] He leans hard on the assertion that history is the sum of the biographies of great men (125), without considering that Carlyle's interest runs down to and his philosophy includes, as I have already indicated, the poor rustic who gave King Charles his own rude fare and exchanged clothes with him, and also the poor woman whom Young, 'walking up hill bridle in hand,' met in France. He finds that Carlyle sympathizes only with the separate life of each man, not with the collective life of all men (124), disregarding the fact that Carlyle is an artist and cannot work otherwise, and the more significant fact that he would sympathize individually with all men and unite them in a great collective parcel by making them acquiesce in the Divine Order through loyalty to a divinely gifted man. This is by no means definitive consideration. It is, therefore, the more extraordinary that Mazzini should have put his finger unerringly upon the noteworthy result in Carlyle's literary practice of the shortcomings of the Hero doctrine (138). I shall

[1] *Essays* of Joseph Mazzini, 127; *The Writings of Thomas Carlyle*, (published October, 1843).

presently revert to those sentences in which he contrasts Carlyle's treatment of the past with his treatment of his own time.

Even before the Hero-Theory was finally set forth, Mill began to find that fault in Carlyle's teaching which ultimately became one of the causes of estrangement between these men. In his review of *The French Revolution* he pointed out with a kindliness induced by his grim relation to the document before him, that Carlyle's method was the artist's not the scientist's (315), that the author tended to undervalue general principles (317), and that as a result he made no difficulty in laughing out of court representative institutions.[2] 'When,' he continued, 'a nation *has* faith in any men, or any set of principles, representative institutions furnish the only regular and peaceable mode in which that faith can quietly declare itself, and those men, or those principles, obtain predominance' (317). From this Mill proceeded naturally to the view that under the most democratic institutions power is always in, or is *always passing into*, the hands of those men who are genuinely able to exercise it; and the correlative view that, since you must have a way to find your leader, all roads must be left open to the great man. You cannot rely on special creation, but must rather facilitate natural occurence. Mill offers here the vague but practicable means of allowing the Hero to discover himself. His censure of Carlyle for failing to indicate a means by which the Hero may be discovered is

[2] John Stuart Mill, *Early Essays.*

just—the more so that Carlyle clearly envisaged the problem, though, as we shall see, he did not supply the deficiency.

Mill's criticism has the marks of the scientific method, but it is not touched by evolutionary dogma. Spencer is the first to approach the doctrine of great men from the point of view of Darwinism. Spencer found the scientific treatment of social phenomena impossible while men held to the false 'great-men theory.'[3] For him as for some others, the great-men theory is summarized in that unhappily exaggerated generalization of history as the biographies of great men. This to Spencer is an apparent, not an actual condition. For the great man is in fact merely the agent of all those influences which at the moment focus in him. True social progress must therefore be studied in terms not of the great man but in terms of the influences. These influences are physical causes, such as climate, soil, and the natural character of men. Spencer then finds the great man theory neglectful of influences, especially in the statement of Carlyle, whom he quotes. He forgets, or ignores, the fact that Carlyle gave in theory heavy emphasis to environment, and in practice even heavier to environment, ancestry, and such influences. But the chief defect is that his criticism presupposes the great man as 'approximately equal in capacities'[4] to all other individuals, whereas in his *Postscript* to *The Study of Sociology* he divides men into

[3] *Study of Sociology* and *Principles of Sociology*, *passim*.

[4] In Pt. VII of *Principles of Sociology*, Spencer rationalizes the origin and development of orators, poets, men of letters.

three classes—'a few clever individuals, many ordinary, some decidedly stupid.'[5] And in *The Evanescence of Evil* he speaks like Carlyle himself: 'Divine Right of kings means the divine right of anyone who can get uppermost.'[6] A sane statement of the Spencerian view, informed by the spirit of compromise, is the following, quoted from a fugitive source:

I do not believe that great movements can be brought about by prophets, however enlightened their views, however vigorous their personalities, unless there is a corresponding energy below. An individual may initiate and control a great force of public opinion; I do not think he can originate it.

This passage was written—it could not have been otherwise— after the historical method had come into its own. For us John Morley is the best exemplar of the method, for he is on his guard against its drawbacks.[7] The historical method, as he himself said, seeks 'two things. The first, the correlation of leading facts and social ideas with one another in a given community at a given time. The second, the evolution of order succeeding to order in common beliefs, tastes, customs, diffusion of wealth, laws, and all the arts of life' (73). Upon these fundamentals his own biographical-historical writing is set. And he is acute enough not to think that Carlyle fails to strive for these two things. His maturest judgment upon Carlyle's conception of hero-worship is that it 'falsifies perspective' (68) because it interjects 'the standards of art' into the 'business of choos-

[5] A keen discussion of Spencer's ideas may be found *passim* in Mallock's *Aristocracy and Evolution*.

[6] Pt. 2, Ch. 6, Sec. 3. [7] *Politics and History*, 73-76.

ing political heroes' (69). Morley, like Mazzini, puts his finger upon the result of the inherent defect. For a full consideration of the point we are however not yet prepared.

Within the last thirty years a great number of sporadic criticisms of Carlyle's doctrines have been made. These are in most instances tangential, very far from striking toward the center. Many indeed are obiter dicta. They are not the more to be excused on that account of course; but they may be ignored. Of the more formal, that of Frederick Harrison in his *Studies in Early Victorian Literature* has received its just reward in two trenchant paragraphs by Professor MacMechan.[8] To Traill, who wore the cloak of Centenary Editor, Professor MacMechan is too lenient.[9] He admits some justice in Traill's point that the subdivisions of types in the six lectures are 'obviously artificial.'[10] Yet they are nothing, if artificial. They are natural types. The limitation in number is perhaps artificial, for six lectures are six and the types are selected—of course with reference to the reading and prejudices of the lecturer. Witness Carlyle's assertion that the shapes of the Hero are immeasurably diverse. Can Traill have read the translator's preface to the first edition of *Meister's Apprenticeship* (page 8, his own edition!)? 'A picture of Raphael,' it is there said, 'a Greek statue, a play of Sophocles or Shakespeare' reveal slowly 'the earnest features of that beauty, which has its foundation in the deepest nature of man.' His phrasing is slovenly, indeed. Obviously selected, yes; obviously artificial, no! Gods, prophets, poets,

[8] *Heroes and Hero-Worship*, lxxxiii. [9] Ibid., lxx, lxxi.
[10] *The Works of Thomas Carlyle*, Centenary Edition, V, ix.

kings, priests, men of letters are *natural* 'subdivisions' of the great. But this is not the head and front of the Centenary Editor's offense. 'The sixfold classification of the various forms of the heroic . . . ,' he remarks, 'has only been accomplished by dint of varying the definition of the word.' The superficiality of the whole introduction may be tested by this quotation. It is very enlightening as to how near Traill came to what he called the 'commonplace' main idea.

Garnett, Carlyle's excellent biographer, is better acquainted with his document. But he asserts that 'the hero . . . acts as pleases himself.'[11] This we have seen is not the fact. He, also, asserts that Carlyle 'did not see his way to identify plastic Art with the moralities which alone interested him.'[11] If he means that Carlyle has not the technical equipment for the identification, as from the context I think he probably did mean, I agree; but if he means that Carlyle did not see the identity, I disagree upon evidence adduced upon the page preceding this and upon Carlyle's lifelong equation of the true and the beautiful. Garnett offers another criticism. He finds it difficult 'to square the truth of *Hero-Worship* with the truth of *Sartor Resartus*.' I shall quote his statement of the case:

Carlyle insists with as much energy as ever that 'this so solid-looking material world is, at bottom, in very deed, Nothing; is a visual and tactual manifestation of God's power and presence—a shadow hung out by Him on the bosom of the Void Infinite; nothing more.' This seems to merge all human agency in Divine agency, and to reduce

[11] *Life of Carlyle*, Ch. vi.

all heroic action to illusion. The contradiction can undoubtedly be reconciled, but not Carlyle nor another has yet shown how (11).

With such preparation for the distinguished service, I hasten to point out that Carlyle himself has effected the reconciliation. To me it seems perfectly clear, after the analyses presented in Chapters II and III of this discussion, that the truth of *Sartor* and truth of *Heroes* square perfectly with each other. The fact is this: so far from being 'illusion,' 'heroic action' is the only real thing in a world of illusion, for in order to guide men to the Reality which underlies Appearance, the hero must live and move and have his being 'in the inward Sphere of Things.' 'His life therefore is a piece from the everlasting Heart of Nature.' Garnett, too, makes something of the fact that Carlyle excludes general laws from their proper place in the human story.

Professor MacMechan himself has made no criticism of importance. His services have been so great to the student of both *Sartor* and *Heroes* that one hesitates to write a word which may sound ungracious. Yet I must observe that owing to the fact that his analysis of the Hero-Theory is not complete and that he spends his time largely—and to very good advantage be it said—rescuing Carlyle from his more careless detractors, he has done comparatively little to the purpose of the present inquiry.

Constructive criticism is to be found in each of the statements of the great-man theory that comes after 1840 —if not expressed at least implied. Sometimes the criticism is feeble, as in Frederic Myers' *Lectures on Great Men*. This book, indeed, affords such criticism as a poorly pol-

ished mirror gives of a human face. Little profit lies for us in it and its kind. We must turn rather to Emerson's *Representative Men*, which attempts to reconcile the great man with democracy, and to Mallock's *Aristocracy and Evolution*, which gives the great man a place in the evolutionary process.

Emerson's doctrine presents two almost contradictory aspects. Unquestionably it was derived from Carlyle's; yet the evidence of the documents themselves permitted one student to conclude: 'Es lässt sich ein direkter Einfluss von Carlyle's *Heroes* auf Emerson's *Representative Men* nirgends nachweisen.'[12] And because of this, it is the best criticism of Carlyle's teaching. It is Emerson's version of the great-man phenomena. *The American Scholar* foreshadowed the full conception.[13] The Scholar is '*Man Thinking*'; his office 'is to cheer, to raise, and to guide men by showing them facts among appearances'; he reveals the one design that 'unites and animates the farthest pinnacle and the lowest trench.'[14] This is Carlylean, and this continues to mark later studies. The contrast lies in another quarter.

The introductory essay on the *Uses of Great Men* defines the type:

I count him a great man who inhabits a higher sphere of thought, into which other men rise with labor and difficulty; he has but to open his eyes to see things in a true light and in larger relations, whilst they must make painful corrections and keep a vigilant eye on many sources of error.[15]

[12] Ernst von Wiecki, *Carlyle's Helden und Emerson's Repräsentanten*.
[13] The date of this lecture, 1837, need not give us pause. For we have already seen that Carlyle's ideas were complete by 1832.
[14] Emerson, *Works*, i, 84 ff. [15] Ibid., iv, 12.

Men are not only representative, 'first, of things, and second of ideas' (14), but 'participant' (17). They participate by virtue of genius, which 'is the naturalist or geographer of the supersensible regions, and draws their map' (21). And 'the power they (representative men) communicate is not theirs. When we are exalted by ideas, we do not owe this to Plato, but to the idea, to which also Plato was debtor' (24). Then, Emerson recognizes great men who are less than enormous. 'Between rank and rank of our great men are wide intervals' (24). Energy is the desideratum. 'We are all wise in capacity, though so few in energy.' To these great men a 'generous trust is permitted. Serve the great. Stick at no humiliation' (33). Yet 'there are no common men. All men are at last of a size' (35). Consequently—if one may ever use the word in discourse of Emerson—

> the heroes of the hour are relatively great; of a faster growth; or they are such in whom, at the moment of success, a quality is ripe which is then in request. . . . Ask the great man if there be none greater. His companions are; and no less great but the more that society cannot see them. Nature never sends a great man into the planet without confiding the secret to another soul (35-6).

Indeed, all men have 'a central identity' (37), and 'great men exist that there may be greater men' (38), a continuous preparation for ever more thorough and more frequent inhabitors of 'a higher sphere of thought.'

To bring Emerson's idea into perfect clarity we must glance at the essays which follow this introductory discussion. Plato, 'like every great man, consumed his times.

What is a great man but one of great affinities, who takes up into himself all arts, sciences, all knowables, as his food?' (43). In short, a perfect representative. 'He is a great average man; one who, to the best thinking, adds a proportion and equality in his faculties, so that men see in him their own dreams and glimpses made available and made to pass for what they are' (61). But not all men are perfectly representative. That is reserved for such as Plato, 'men of faith and philosophy,' who 'have the perception of identity.' There are on a lower plane 'men of talent and action' who have 'the perception of difference' and are 'conversant with facts and surfaces, cities and persons, and the bringing certain things to pass' (144). Nevertheless, the genius as well as the man of talent is great only 'through the general,' 'he finds himself in the river of the thoughts and events, forced onward by the ideas and necessities of his contemporaries' (182). This is another way of saying he 'consumed his times.' So Napoleon is 'the incarnate Democrat' for he had the virtues and the vices of the middle classes and 'above all he had their spirit or aim' (214). 'He is no hero, in the high sense' (215). Emerson, if I gather his meaning aright, classes himself as a man of talent, not as a man of genius. Finally we must note that Emerson says: 'If I were to compare action . . . with a life of contemplation, I should not venture to pronounce with much confidence in favor of the former.' He makes reference to Prometheus (13, 14) but also to Plutarch (19) and Mencius (19).

The criticism of Carlyle involved in this doctrine is simple. There is gradual ascent from the average man to

the greatest average man; on the way one passes the man of talent. The accident of the ripe time and the man coinciding is a powerful element in the course of things. We may look on to an ever increasing greatness in the man of the hour, for the times which he consumes are ever more complex, more imposing. And the great man representing the things and the ideas (which he sees in their true light and relations) is therefore not, like the Hero, the greater if the times are the worse. On the contrary, the times are, for example, partly responsible for their Napoleon. Eliminating these we have in Emerson Carlyle's formula—a mystical universe, a leader, a loyal world of men. But even the bare, similar synopsis of the conception is aglow with democratic recognition of the power of ordinary men. No man ever more truly believed that a career was open to talent; and no man makes it less possible to say: 'I could not, for God willed it otherwise.' In brief, the Representative man seems to me a constructive criticism of the Hero.

Spencer meant apparently that evolution and the great man are incompatible. Mallock attempts to reintroduce the great man into the evolutionary system from which Spencer had eliminated him. His position is this. The theory of survival of the fittest is quite separate from the theory of the great man. The facts which each generalizes are different sets of facts. The former takes cognizance of a very slow movement, measurable by human perception only over long ages. The latter regards a rapid movement explicable only in terms of the leadership of great men.[16] Social evolution is entirely dependent upon the activities

[16] W. H. Mallock, *Aristocracy and Evolution*, Bk. i, Ch. 4.

of these men. But it comes to pass in a twofold fashion. Some results of the telegraph are intended by its inventors; others are not intended,—'a variety of new wants and habits, new methods of conducting trade and government' (104). 'Greatness, then, is merely those qualities which, in any domain of progress, make the few more efficient than the many' (127). It is not one quality, but various combinations of may (Book II, ch. 1). The ordinary man need not be stupid; he is merely the man whose talents do not increase the efficiency of other men (252). The reason for the twofold aspect of progress is that the fittest survivor promotes progress only by living, while others die, whereas the great man promotes progress by helping others to live (Book II, ch. 11). In other words, he sets the biological law to work in an artificial world; or one may say, the great man qualifies the generalization of the biological scientists, as applied to sociological data.

The criticism here implied of Carlyle's Hero is somewhat sharply expressed in other passages. Mallock speaks of 'that exaggerated view of history which expresses itself in the works of such writers as Froude and Carlyle, and which vaguely attributes all the progressive changes of humanity to the personality of rulers, of political and military autocrats' (50). And we may conclude that he, like Spencer and some others, has not carefully examined Carlyle's doctrine, basing his judgment on that aspect which is least characteristic of the idea, though it appear to some most characteristic of the execution of Carlyle's

projects. Taking in his own critical position a phase for the whole, he asserts that

> the error of writers like Carlyle was that they took a part for the whole. They recognized no great man at all except great men of the greatest kind—heroic figures which appeared once or twice in a century; and as for the rest of mankind, they treated them . . . as a mass of unity, approximately equal in capacity (115-16).

And he refused to recognize that the result of the great man's effort was conditioned by the capacities of ordinary men (215). This last is plain error in Mallock. Carlyle more than once insisted on the need of a world of heroes, on the impossibility of true leadership in a world of valet-souls. And as for Carlyle's not recognizing any but the greatest men, it is perhaps enough to mention that Johnson, Burns, Diderot, Voltaire, Napoleon, Goethe, are of varying degrees of greatness even to Carlyle, and that both the Germany of his preoccupation and the France of his history bristled with reverend names not of the first rank.

A composite of all these criticisms would lead us to confusion. Mill's point that Carlyle gave no assistance to men who were looking for the Hero is well taken; but his own advice is so vague as to be worthless. Leave all roads open, for no man can say from which direction the leader will come,—he says. He does what Carlyle did; he takes it for granted that a man can tell a leader when he sees him. The position is of course literally absurd. Theoretically we must have either a touchstone for recognizing a Hero when he comes—not necessarily that we may ring bells and sing Halleluiahs at his birth, but at least that we may

give him our allegiance long before he has proved his right to it by his works; or we must change our theory. Now a composite of such points as this one made by Mill and supported by Morley would bring us to nothing. Therefore, I rely on the survey we have just completed to be generally illuminating, and I turn to confront Carlyle's doctrine with that of William James.

First we must remind ourselves that Carlyle was fully aware of the problem, that his failure to solve it is not his failure to see it. 'The finding of our *Ableman*,' he said at the outset of the sixth lecture of *Heroes*, 'and getting him invested with the *symbols of ability*, with dignity, worship (*worth*-ship), royalty, kinghood, or whatever we call it, so that *he* may actually have room to guide according to his faculty of doing it,—is the business, well or ill accomplished, of all social procedure whatsoever in this world!' (225-6). Nor, though he refused to fit his formula to the facts, was he perfectly blind to the rôle played by those forces summed up by his scorned contemporary under the word 'environment.' Naturally he does not give the facts a fair place. He takes them from behind, as—'Alas, the Hero from of old has had to cramp himself into strange shapes: the world knows not well at any time what to do with him, so foreign in his aspect in the world!' (178). Or he involves them in doubt:

Given your Hero, is he to become Conqueror, King, Philosopher, Poet? It is an inexplicably complex controversial-calculation between the world and him! He will read the world and its laws; the world with its laws will be there to be read. What the world, on *this* matter, shall permit and bid is, as we said, the most important fact about the world! (91).

James deals fairly with all the conditions.

It was the error in Spencer's position that called forth *Great Men and Their Environment*.[17] James proceeds from the Darwinian distinction between productive causes, 'tendencies to spontaneous variation,' and preservative causes. He shows that the laws which produce the individual are in a cycle unknown to us and distinct from those which obviously maintain the individual once he is produced. Social evolution is, consequently,

> a resultant of the interaction of two wholly distinct factors —the individual, deriving his peculiar gifts from the play of physiological and intra-social forces, but bearing all the power of initiative and origination in his hand; and, second, the social environment, with its power of rejecting both him and his gifts. Both factors are essential to change. The community stagnates without the impulse of the individual. The impulse dies away without the sympathy of the community (232).

James, one perceives at once, gives no touchstones for recognizing the great man, for he accords to the world a non-conscious veto, a natural, inalienable right of 'selection.' At this point his conception diverges from the Hero-Theory. For with Carlyle the Hero was the center of the system, whereas in fact, as with James, the great man and the world are, so to speak, twin foci of an elliptical plan. Carlyle's great man is more robust than James'. He will not be selected. If the environment is not loyal to him, as theoretically it should be, he will enforce himself upon it. The position is entirely moral, granted Carlyle's definitions of Right and Might. In practice, of course, Might may be long enough on the side of Wrong to do incalcu-

[17] William James, *The Will to Believe*, 217.

lable damage; but in the head of the Scottish prophet this was unthinkable and therefore actually impossible. He put the matter once with great clearness with regard to a specific, actual undertaking:

> You must have a man to direct [he said to the British Museum Commissioners] who knows well what the duty is that he has to do; and who is determined to go through with all that he has to do, in spite of all clamour raised against him; and who is not anxious to obtain approbation, but is satisfied that he will be able to obtain it by-and-by, provided he acts ingenuously and faithfully.[18]

The question is fresh in our own day in terms of executive and board of directors (sometimes called Senate). And it is inextricably complex. But this we can see, that a William Hohenzollern acting upon such advice takes his vision to be divine and, deciding upon his duty regardless of popular or private voice, leads the whole train of consequences by his heroic piping into the River Weser. Here then is the defect in the Hero-Theory: it offers no touchstone—it can offer none; and it permits no natural rejection by the environment.

Natural selection of great men goes nevertheless continuously on in spite of all theories. When facts recede far enough in the past, when the natural processes have operated and their results stand in perspective, that is, when history has pointed out the great man, then the Hero-Theory is a trustworthy instrument; used contemporaneously it is unsafe and indeed almost valueless. It is the tool of the biographer and the historian, not of the social reformer.

[18] Garnett, *Life*, 122.

CHAPTER VII

THE INFLUENCE OF THE HERO IDEA ON CARLYLE'S WORK

Viewed in the light of this criticism Carlyle's work falls into two parts. There are compositions in which the defect of the Hero-Theory is of little consequence: those for which Time, classifying men, has performed the function of selection for which Carlyle made no provision. The subjects dealt with in these are more rather than less removed from the author's day; they stand out in true proportion, the hero already distinguished from the charlatan, if rightly understood. In this class, naturally, those books and essays which have as their object social or political reform do *not* belong. And of the biographical and historical pieces, which in general do belong in this class, it is in most cases true that, when the subjects are near Carlyle's time, the defect of the theory mars the work. So that we cannot say that all the biographies and histories are free from disfigurement. For in judging material and men actually or nearly contemporary, Carlyle had like other men to take his chances. It may be that he was right oftener than he was wrong, for in most circumstances he had a kind of shrewd wisdom and insight. On the other hand, his advantage in this may have been counterbalanced by a fanatic adherence to his doctrine. In handling the more remote past, however, he seems to have had a peculiar infallibility. For his Hero-Theory, though it be a weak guide to conduct, is a reliable, fine, and flexible instrument

when turned into a method for the biographer, the historian, or the critic. Carlyle's difficulties with it arose from his determination to justify preconceptions.

The other group of Carlyle's writings comprises those which are seriously affected by the shortcomings of the theory. The most imposing of these works are *Chartism*, *Latter-Day Pamphlets*, Books I, III, and IV of *Past and Present*, certain pieces like the *Occasional Discourse on the Nigger Question*, many a diatribe in his letters, and of course *Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History*. These, for the most part, pass judgment upon the age. But there are also judgments upon individuals, those written down in *Reminiscences* and in letters, and those uttered so frequently in Cheyne Row, making their way also ultimately into print.

Even the devotee must admit that Carlyle is wrong far oftener than he is right in judging the men of his time. Note for instance, the verdict with which he opens the *Reminiscences of Sundry* (1867): 'Many Literary, and one or two political or otherwise Public Persons, more or less superior to the common run of men I have met with in my life; but perhaps none of them really great, or worth more than a transient remembrance, loud as the talk about them once may have been.'[1] These are the words of an old man, depressed to a mood of the futility of human endeavor. They may not be too much made of. Yet the accounts of Lamb, Darwin, Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Southey in the *Reminiscences* have a circumstantial live-

[1] *Reminiscences by Thomas Carlyle*, Norton, ii, 275.

liness that makes one dare to find a considerable responsibility for the personal judgments. Moreover, the journal in passages written many years earlier often bears these out. There can be little doubt that in spite of his insight and wisdom Carlyle did great injustice to his contemporaries. To me the reason lies in this: he adds to his human chances of being wrong in a fair half of the cases the gambling possibility of finding a man who will seem as clearly a leader to his fellows as he will to future ages. 'The personalities that he venerated were exclusively historic—excepting Goethe who was a foreigner,' says Mr. Brownell, who then accounts for the fact by Carlyle's 'lack of deference'—among other things.[2] Now lack of deference comes of finding none to defer to. He saw no Heroes abroad in his world. Mrs. Browning could laugh—because she admired—and in her laughter go to the heart of the matter.

> Every age
> Appears to souls who live in it (ask Carlyle)
> Most unheroic. (*Aurora Leigh*, Book V)

For contemporaries he, even less than another, has the infallible test. He could not see Lincoln with the Atlantic to set him off, though down the lane of a thousand years he perceived the 'Bishop of Winchester, afterward Archbishop of Canterbury, excellent Elphegus, still dimly decipherable to us as a man of great natural discernment, piety, and inborn veracity; a hero-soul.'[3] It is time we were done laying Carlyle's faults entirely to his indigestion and insomnia, and sought causes in his head.

[2] *Victorian Prose Masters*, 53.
[3] *Early Kings of Norway*, Centenary Edition, 56.

Among the judgments upon contemporaries, the *Life of John Sterling* alone is unmarked by the author's preoccupations. But that is not to say that the Hero conception has not affected it. On the contary, this fine and charming book, is, to my mind, that one of Carlyle's books into which is most intensely fused the Heroic scheme of things. Sterling is not presented as a Hero; he is a Hero-Worshipper, excelling 'in clear and prefect fidelity to truth wherever found, in childlike and soldierlike, pious and valiant loyalty to the Highest.' One of the Heroes he saw in this world was Thomas Carlyle; and Thomas Carlyle never forgot the essay which he wrote in 1839, when so few recognized the master. One of the secrets—perhaps the secret—of the perfection of *The Life of John Sterling* lies in these facts.

Carlyle's judgments upon his age are without exception disfigured by his search for great men to suit the terms of his theory. In *Chartism* he establishes the 'sociological point of view' and sees no hope of making things right with men by democratic methods. In *Latter-Day Pamphlets* he sees hope only if the 'few Wise take charge of the many Foolish.' In *Past and Present*, he sees Justice the Reward of Labour, if men will only *labour* in a blessed loyalty of Governor and Governed. In all, right and progress depend upon human relations getting themselves into conformity with Divine law, through the agency of Heroes. Mazzini lays Carlyle's failure to do 'even common justice' to his time at the door of his 'contempt for political reform.'[4] And, it seems to me, the contempt for political reform (which means democratization of government)

[4] Mazzini, *Essays*, 138.

must be laid at the door of the Hero. Constitutions as plentiful as blackberries, a parliament in every village, are nothing: you must find a leader—Carlyle was always saying in one figure or another. All he could himself see was the apparatus which elected Lincoln. And that typified the age. 'Your ship can not double Cape Horn by its excellent plans of voting!' The Hero-Theory tripped him up at each of two steps. He saw no great men and he concluded there were none. Then, reasoning that the deficiency could not be the fault of a beneficent Providence, he concluded further that a world of valet-souls was keeping the great men down. It follows then that he frequently realizes the inconsistency of this position. In such enlightened moments he belabors little men (who were sometimes not little) for not being great, and he belabors all men for not preparing themselves to receive the leader.

But—'magnanimi heroes, nati melioribus annis'!—when time has set a figure or a situation in perspective, then all is different. In the first place time picks out the leader and makes it easier to distinguish the sham and the true, for time gives the workman the materials he requires. Moreover, if there is any good to remember evil falls away with the centuries. About the figures of those who have died within the memory of living men too much contradictory, confusing human material clings. The lectures illustrate my point. As he approaches his own day, Carlyle finds more and more shortcomings in his Heroes. Odin was a clear case; but Johnson, Napoleon, Burns have to be qualified, explained, and now and then feverishly defended. Goethe is the single exception, and indeed, for all the in-

terchange of letters and *Packetchen*, Weimar was in the first third of the nineteenth century removed from London —and Craigenputtock—by more than physical distance. Goethe and the past and its commanding figures he treats royally.

A good impression of this situation may be had by comparing the book entitled *The Ancient Monk* with those books of *Past and Present* dealing with the problem of 1843. The art of the latter is often first rate, but the total effect is of a tumultuous beating of the air. In the former, a calm and sun-like clearness of figure and background, a clarified signification of every movement ennoble without dehumanizing the scene. But in his own surroundings Carlyle can find nothing that will admit ennobling, for nothing he sees is capable of adjustment to the Ideal Universe of his theory. Wherefore he groans and gesticulates. Too much can not be made of the difference in *tone* between the tirades in those books devoted to his own times and the invocations, adjurations, in the books which revert to an earlier time.

Past and Present affords contrast; *The French Revolution* shows insufficient perspective. Hundreds of men and women move before the reader, but Time has not revealed men in their true proportions. Carlyle is hard put to it for a Hero. In the earlier parts of the work Mirabeau is made the most of. But to make him a Hero is impossible: Car-

[5] Sterling wrote to Emerson under date of June 28, 1842, 'If he (Carlyle) writes our Civil War, the book will have a prodigious advantage over his *French Revolution*, that there will be one great Egyptian Colossus towering over the temples, tribes, and tents around (*Correspondence of Emerson and Sterling*).

lyle merely succeeds in falsifying his portrait. And Mirabeau died before the action was played out. His place is filled by Danton, whose huge frame and voice are enough to get him called 'the Mirabeau of the Sansculottes.' And how much, one wonders, is the deficient record of events after the 'Feast of the *Être Suprême*' to be set down to want of a central figure? Danton, 'Of Arcis-sur-Aube; born of "good farmer people" there' had got himself guillotined by Samson the Headsman half a dozen pages earlier.[5]

Upon Frederick the Great, also, Carlyle inflicted the Heroic standard. As always with his subjects—Mahomet, Cromwell, Burns,—he achieves a *Rettung* from traditional misjudgments. Frederick he clears of the Voltaire charges, among others. His portrayal of the more purely biographical instances and phases is on the whole just and always powerful. But when he forces the public figure of the king and general into the mold of divinely authenticated Hero, then he fails. And by the measures of his insistence upon picturing the Hero, his work is untrue. For his method as historian and biographer is essentially that of the artist. He comes at a conception by insight and embodies it in selected detail. The method is open to the fault to which all art is liable, that, if the insight be not true, the details, however consistently presented, cannot constitute a true picture. The artist, therefore, should be without crotchets, prejudices, or disfiguring theories. Carlyle was not. How many of the desponding struggles with the *Frederick* were no more than battles of artist and moralist, no one can say. But one must often feel that Carlyle's agony in writing

was little more than this. The artist with his love of the true fact must have writhed while the theorist called lying, veracity; brutality, justice; wilful tyranny, God-inspired determination.

The *Cromwell* is less defaced. The impression of a perfect leader that is created was at least partly the result of the crusading spirit of the author. He had set out to correct a false and pernicious tradition. Yet, under the aegis of the Hero Idea, in the opening summaries he almost ignores the increasingly significant problem of the equilibrium of Parliament and King and People. Questions of Constitution, Taxation, and other 'very measurable Privileges' he sweeps aside. The 'heroic efforts' in field and town he stresses. The soldier who was preparing himself for whatever offices might fall upon him in God's service; the fervent, tense hypochondriac that feared God and nothing else, that was ever relying upon the support of the Lord and getting it; the direct, inarticulate ('ay, ay, thou poor Oliver'), forceful Cromwell is disclosed more certainly with each letter and with each comment. All those who swarm about him are depreciated and minimized. Cromwell could not—nay, did not, we are assured, think of the crown. It is sometimes necessary to disperse an authority or two for complete surety in such case. Carlyle does not hesitate. And, indeed, having as a result of looking with theoretical eyes *into* his subject pitched on the conception of a perfect great man, in the process of looking *out of* him he sees circumstances in a wrong light. Yet, untrue as his Hero preoccupation makes the *Cromwell*, the book has within it a corrective. Carlyle's conception warns the reader against the old tra-

ditional notion of a charlatan, and the violence of his attack upon all who disagree with him and of his manner in general bids the reader be wary of accepting this paragon of Heroes. Thus, though the defect of the theory has perhaps not touched essentially the history-biographies, they bear clear marks of the doctrine.

Carlyle's life, as well as his books, showed marks of the Hero influence. He was himself, in some degree, the Hero of his theory. As early as 1832, a writer in *Noctes Ambrosianae* (v, 43) called him 'a man of genius,' and the end is not yet. Few men outside religion—and no Briton—have had a greater number of loyal followers, or more great disciples. In 1839 Southey read and extolled him,[6] and Tieck devoted himself about the same time. Lowell, Leslie Stephen, Sterling, M. D. Conway, interpreted him to the eager. Ruskin and Emerson, Tyndall and Huxley, Kingsley and Tennyson and Froude and Whitman are among those who owed him allegiance. Many individual allegiances there must have been between those of Father O'Shea and Emerson at the beginning and those of the purchasers of the popular edition of *Sartor* in 1880 with its thirty thousand copies. And no year passes without hundreds of young men and women coming, under his guidance, into the presence of enduring truths. For those who judge him, who have passed the first devotion, let George Meredith stand. 'He was the greatest of the Britons of his time—and after the British fashion of not coming near perfection; Titanic, not Olympian: a heaver of rocks, not a shaper.'[7] He has

[6] H. C. Robinson, *Diary*, iii, 171. [7] George Meredith, *Letters*, ii, 333.

had, in part at least, the following which in his own time he believed no man was securing. Through Ruskin he may yet influence the legislation of a day that has not dawned, and thus come at length to achieve himself the result he predicted for Goethe.

Behind those outward things was there the true Hero? That is, had Carlyle truth of insight and did he conduct himself veraciously, in accordance with the truth at which he arrived? It seems to me impossible that Carlyle can have failed to test himself by these questions and to have driven himself consciously to attain the standard. All the earnestness of his letters I conceive to be the expression of his striving or of the yearning which preceded. Upon the data before every reader, I think we may say easily that, whether he thought of himself as hero or not, he worked through the intuition not through the logical sense. He gave up the syllogistic method with the study of geometry. *Sartor* discloses six states of progress, each intuitively discovered, which lead to his ultimate philosophy. This philosophy has, with that of the German idealists, at least as good a right to be regarded as truth as the metaphysical conception of any school. There is, moreover, a sense in which Carlyle's philosophy is inner truth, that is possible only to idealism of its type. Furthermore, many of the doctrines have obtained the stamp of 'common sense.' They are commonplaces. Carlyle's familiar antithesis between character and institutions, for an example, was an elemental truth to his time; for us it has become elementary, without ceasing to be elemental. The same is true of Carlyle's doctrine of work—poignantly true.

Whether Carlyle acted veraciously—and by action one must understand here writing and speaking—in accord with the inner truth of his general philosophy is another question. I have already considered it as regards his literary practice. The familiar Carlylean distinction between men of action and men of thought offers a specious problem. Fichte appears to have regarded men of thought and men of action as of about equal importance and asserts that the latter are trained by the former and must themselves be men of thought before they can be men of action.[8] It seems entirely likely that Carlyle, although he nowhere is explicit in the matter, prefers men of action to men of thought because he believed with Fichte that the former are a step further advanced. The great man must think, but he must put his thought into act. When therefore Carlyle upbraids himself or another for not being a man of action he causes us a moment's confusion. Speaking out the idea to which one has attained—is this action? In the popular understanding of the word doubtless it is not, and this understanding betrayed Carlyle. But in the proper interpretation of the word, speaking is, as I tried to show in my opening discussion, action. Talking indeed has come to be for the human kind one of the most efficient modes of action: a man can act upon his thought only once, at best few times, but if with proper eloquence, logic, and persuasiveness he expresses his thought, he may in the persons of innumerable others act his thought many times. Some men, to be sure, talk to physical ends, some to spiritual

[8] Fichte, *Sämmtliche Werke*, vi, 354, 416.

ends. But in the exalted sphere in which Heroes move the spiritual precedes the physical. *The Gettysburg Address* as an idea takes precedence over and is greater than innumerable imposing executive orders.

Whether Carlyle acted veraciously in accord with the inner truth of his general philosophy amounts then to this: were the special doctrines Carlyle expounded harmonious with his general philosophy? The answer is, that, for such a volume of expression, *not* systematic in its nature, the harmony is of a degree to warrant the conclusion that he strove consciously to bring accord into his doctrines. His doctrines of Hero-worship, of Silence, of the Unconsciousness of Genius, his literary criticism and his biographical method, his anti-democratic bias, his regard for individuals rather than machines, his distinction between manufacture and creation are application or manifestation of the intuitional metaphysic. The Gospel of Work is also in accord with the whole scheme. For a world of governors and governed involves the duty of each to labor for all—an idea more democratic than Carlyle is generally given credit for. Doubt is the momentary failure of loyalty to what is above one, and is removed by work or action. His pessimism, were it an intellectual mode, could not be reconciled with his doctrine; but it is merely emotional. The faith in social regeneration, in a world of sincere men, to which his mind gave approval, expels pessimism.

It remains to say a word of Carlyle's consciousness of the mutability of the Hero-stuff in himself. His early life exhibits the great man seeking the due way of being for

him: teacher, preacher, lawyer, farmer, politician: these will not do. 'The course of life and education' led him to be a man of thought, and a writer of books rather than a speaker of words, though he tried speaking with conspicuous success upon occasions a quarter of a century apart. As a writer he tried his hand at all types, too. His failure as poet he may himself have accounted for by the accident of not 'having had a singing master in his youth.' How he explained his failure with Wotton Reinfred, one can hardly guess. And indeed though he could not write a novel, the middle book of *Sartor Resartus* proves him a narrator of imaginative power and of skill. At all events, writer he became. Political and social prophet was a possible rôle to him, in that profession. That rôle he often played—and the stars in their courses, as Garnett says, have fought for him. By decrying cant, he exalted sincerity; by speaking against chatter, he spoke for silence; by condemning tawdriness, he spoke for genuineness; by abusing 'the most and the worst,' he exalted 'the best and the fewest.' And the English speaking world gained by the teaching somewhat. Nevertheless his Hero-Theory lessened his natural fitness for such thinking, and it was primarily as pure Man of Letters—'a great soul . . . endeavoring to speak-forth the Inspiration that is in him by Printed Books'—that he worked. It is not always easy to see this, for into the midst of the truest work of the man of letters is interjected the political or social diatribe. The essence of his compositions, moreover, is a gospel of sincerity and labor. But the bulk of his best work is the imaginative creation of beauty, the artist's magic disclosure

of the true and the whole. How thoroughly aware he was of his great function those slightly self-conscious judgments of his upon his works (often for each work written several, in letters or spoken to Jane Carlyle as he went out to ride) bear witness. No man was at heart humbler than he; the self-consciousness is that of a man who has, like the Hero, 'a commission higher than the world's, the dictate of Nature herself.'

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